



## Meeting notes – January 12, 2019

Present: Marshall Distel, Christine Forde, Regina Mahony, CCRPC; Bob Henneberger, Red Cross; Mathew LaRock, Global Foundries; Josh Estey, CSWD; Kate Hamond, Pat Hennard, Laura Ann Nicolai, Vermont Department of Health.

Marshall Distel called the meeting to order at 0905. There were no changes to the agenda, nor public comment on items not on the agenda. Introductions were made. There were no comments on last month's meeting notes.

Deputy State Epidemiologist, Laura Ann Nicolai, started the meeting with a presentation on influenza pandemics and influenza prevention in general. There are four specific types of the influenza virus, but only two cause the seasonal flu that most people would be familiar with. In the absence of a pandemic, a severe flu year kills nearly 650,000 people worldwide, while a mild one kills just under 300,000.

The influenza virus has the ability to mutate very rapidly, which makes the human immune system particularly vulnerable to this virus. The lack of immunity to new mutated viruses often result in large-scale morbidity. There have been four recorded pandemics within the last 100 years. A pandemic is declared when the virus infects not just one country at a time, but also the whole world.

In the year prior to the pandemic of 1918 the life expectancy for women was 54, and 48 for men in the US. By the end of 1918 the average life expectancy in the U.S. had fallen by 12 years. There were three deadly waves of the 1918 influenza pandemic, which reported killed between 50-100 million people worldwide (one-third of the world's population). While it likely had origins in Kansas, in 1918 it gained worldwide attention when it swept through Spain and infected the King, which is how it became known as the Spanish Flu.

The impact of the 1918 pandemic on Vermont was well documented. The virus spread through the transportation hubs of White River Junction, Montpelier, St Albans, and Burlington. Interestingly, the Burlington mayor opened an alcohol dispensary where flu victims with signed notes from their doctors could acquire carefully measured quantities of alcoholic beverages, as they were falsely thought to fight off the flu. Middlebury College was quarantined and UVM was postponed during the fall season.

Public health officials agree that a universal vaccine is a top priority. We are moving away from egg-based vaccine production to cell-based vaccine cultures, but we are still a long way away from a universal vaccine. Moreover, better antiviral drugs are needed as well as nonpharmaceutical interventions and clear/transparent networks of communication. The earliest occurrence of a flu outbreak in a community usually occurs in young children. By the time school officials realize what is happening, it is often too late to prevent the spread of the flu.

There was a brief discussion about the current flu season and Vermont's weekly surveillance reports.

Following the presentation from Laura Ann Nicolai, the group shared brief updates. The Chittenden Solid Waste District (CSWD) is looking to host or provide an active shooter training for employees. Kate Hammond from the Vermont Department of Health suggested that the Essex Police Department would be a good resource to contact.

Kate Hammond put in a plug on behalf of the Vermont Department of Health to encourage LEPC members and their associated organization to consider becoming closed Point of Distribution (POD) partners. A POD is a location where medicines are dispensed to the public during a public health emergency. The idea is to think about disease within the context of continuity of operations trainings. The Vermont Department of Health would like to prioritize first responders, long-term care facilities and groups that have access to a licensed medical professional to provide either pills or a vaccine to staff or family members in the case of a large incident or a pandemic flu.

The meeting ended with a discussion related to upcoming meeting topics. For the March LEPC meeting, CCRPC staff will reach out to Department of Environmental Conservation's spill management team to potentially provide an overview of the environmental impact of hazardous materials spills, the cleanup of spills and enforcement of environmental laws and regulations triggered by spills.

The adjourned the meeting at 1045

The next LEPC meeting will be held on March 12 at the CCPRC offices in Winooski.

*Respectfully submitted by Christine Forde*

Please note: LEPC meeting agendas, minutes, and other information may also be found at <http://www.ccrpcvt.org/about-us/committees/local-emergency-planning-committee/>