

Medical Advisory Group Meeting Summary December 20, 2006 Emergency Communications

Police and firefighters use emergency communication systems everyday; they know what works. Health communication systems for government, doctors, nurses, and hospitals are less well tested; fortunately widespread health emergencies are rare. The Medical Advisory Group convened by Susan Allan, MD, JD, MPH Oregon's Public Health Officer, addressed and debated emergency health communication at their most recent meeting on December 20, 2006.

The Medical Advisory Group first met in October 2006 and includes clinicians, representatives of medical professional organizations, administrators, legal experts, and elected officials. Before the end of the winter, in addition to communication, the group will also address medical ethics in a health emergency, altered standards of care, and allocation of scarce resources, all to help guide the Oregon Public Health Division in making quick decisions in an emergency such as an influenza pandemic.

The most recent meeting included information sharing by Oregon Public Health about existing systems of communication and feedback from the participants about which systems will work best for their profession and which will be robust enough to function in an emergency. Existing emergency communication tools include the Oregon Health Alert Network (www.oregonhan.org), email alerts, blast faxes to clinicians, the hospital capacity website, hotlines, and public health websites. Look forward to a quick web survey of your communication preferences and to a request to enroll in the Oregon Health Alert Network.

Text From Public Health Emergency Preparedness Newsletter
(<http://oregon.gov/DHS/ph/preparedness/news/phep0107.pdf>)

Medical Advisory Group

- The Medical Advisory Group for the OPHD held its second meeting on Dec. 20, at the Oregon Dental Association in Wilsonville. The topic of the meeting was emergency and non-emergency communication with health care providers.
- The group discussed basic emergency risk communication principles, transparency in communications, current and potential channels for distribution of routine and emergency information, how to achieve consistency in messaging, and communication roles in a pandemic.
- The Medical Advisory Group has been convened to assist the state in developing guidelines for decisions in emergencies such as allocation of scarce resources and altered standards of care. The MAG includes approximately 24 representatives of major health care, health professional organizations, tribal organizations, academia, and local government.

