

PANDEMIC INFLUENZA PROJECT

BUILDING A COMPREHENSIVE PANDEMIC INFLUENZA VACCINE PRIORITIZATION PLAN

Background:

Pandemic influenza threatens to cause mass illness and death in California as well as significant economic and social disruption. Immunization is a key prevention strategy for controlling influenza and represents a critical control measure for decreasing the public health impact of a pandemic; however, supply is anticipated to be very limited.

Given the initially limited amount of vaccine that may be available during a pandemic, the California Department of Health Services (CDHS) needs an effective prioritization plan for allocating this resource. CDHS, working with the University of California Berkeley Center for Infectious Disease Preparedness (CIDP), developed a comprehensive pandemic influenza prioritization plan to determine which target groups in California will be designated for initial vaccination. This vaccine prioritization strategy is included in the current California Pandemic Influenza Preparedness and Response Plan.

Objectives:

To develop a novel approach to prioritization of limited vaccine resources that fulfills the following five objectives:

- *Systematic*: The plan is based on a logical methodology to identify alternatives and project outcomes.
- *Justifiable*: The plan is based on epidemiologic, social science and ethics literature and supported by best practices research.
- *Flexible*: The plan can be adjusted based on the changing epidemiologic characteristics of a pandemic.
- *Adaptable*: The plan can be applied to different populations in different settings.
- *Transparent*: The plan is clearly defined and effort has been made to obtain expert opinion and incorporate feedback.

Methods:

Developing a comprehensive vaccination plan requires a multi-dimensional approach. The Pandemic Influenza Decision Analysis Scoring Tool (DAST) was developed to assist the California Department of Health Services (CDHS) in identifying and prioritizing target populations for pandemic influenza vaccine in a way that achieves the State's goals of minimizing health consequences, social disruption, and economic impact. The DAST is based on an analytic hierarchy process (AHP), which is a choice-based modeling technique that helps decision-makers allocate resources across competing alternatives. The DAST methodology is centered on a self-administered survey instrument, which enables experts to assess the relative importance of the vaccination criteria and evaluate the target groups along the criteria. At the end of this process, the DAST produces a rank-ordered list of target groups prioritized for influenza vaccination that can be implemented within the State. This priority list will be used to develop implementation options and recommendations for pandemic influenza vaccine planning.

Results:

In summer 2006, the Pandemic Influenza Vaccine Prioritization Survey will be administered to a representative statewide sample of over 300 pandemic preparedness and response experts. In addition to the medical care service and public health sectors, the sampling frame includes experts from myriad commercial health, public administration, justice and critical infrastructure industries. The results from the prioritization survey will be analyzed and the final prioritization scores will be arranged into a rank-ordered list. These results along with implementation recommendations will be incorporated into the CDHS Pandemic Influenza Preparedness and Response plan.

Pandemic Influenza Project Website:

www.idready.org/pandemic_influenza

CDHS Pandemic Influenza Response Plan Website

<http://www.dhs.ca.gov/ps/dcdc/dcdcindex.htm>

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