

# Spring 2009 H1N1 Response: Charting a Path Forward

Key Themes and Lessons Learned from  
Multiple Sector Response Operations  
Panel Presentation

# Panelists

- **John Auerbach, MBA**  
Commissioner  
Massachusetts Department of Public Health
- **Carolyn Riley**  
Senior Director  
Boston Public Schools
- **Maureen McMahon**  
Disaster Coordinator  
Boston Medical Center
- **Alan Snow, CPP**  
Director-Safety & Security  
Boston Properties, Inc
- **Elsbeth Kalenderian, D.D.S., M.P.H.**  
Assistant Dean  
Harvard Dental School

# Debriefing Meetings

- BPHC participated or facilitated
  - ~15 sessions
  - June, July & August
  - Host of different partners
    - Healthcare
    - Private business community
    - Union leadership
    - Colleges & universities
    - Secondary education
    - Community-based organizations
    - City of Boston departments

# Emerging Themes

- Communications & Messaging

- **Risk**

- What is going on and what is our risk?
    - What do I tell my staff? What do I tell my leadership?
    - How do I keep them informed and without causing unnecessary fear? (Rumor control)
    - How do I know what their concerns are? How do I address them?

- **Tactical**

- Who needs to know?
    - How often do they need to know? How will they know? (mechanism)
    - Where do I find reliable information and the latest information on guidance?

# Emerging Themes - 2

- Operations
  - **Critical services**
    - What are my critical services and how do I maintain them?
    - Who are my critical staff? (Do they know they are critical?)
    - Who are my alternates?
    - What are the implications for our operation?
  - **Human Resources policies**
    - What about sick leave?
    - Can I reassign staff?
  - **Workplace Prevention Strategies**
    - Do we have them? What are they?
    - When and how do we implement them?

# Emerging Themes - 3

- Resources

- **Masks**

- Who are they for?
    - Where can I buy them?
    - Who needs to wear them?
    - When do we need to wear them?

- **Vaccine/Antivirals**

- Who are they for?
    - What is available to my organization/where can I get them?

# (A few) Lessons Learned

- **Trying to develop a plan during the course of an incident is TOO LATE**
  - Need to identify partners/key players within organization in advance
  - Task responsibilities according to role within organization
    - Try to ensure some consistency with day-to-day function
- **The little things count**
  - Look to low cost/no cost measures
- **There is such a thing as too much information!**
  - Identify what is relevant and useful; keep folks informed
  - Identify a feedback loop
- **Partnerships pay off**
  - Use this opportunity to network and share planning templates & ideas
  - No need to reinvent the wheel
  - Try to identify partners with similar circumstance, as resources may vary with size and type of organization
- **..and remember...**



**Flexibility = key**

Emergencies are fluid events

**Be prudent about when to stick to the plan and when to deviate**

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