

CRISIS EMERGENCY RISK COMMUNICATION

Best Practices

FLU VACCINE SHORTAGE

Background and Research

October 6, 2004 - Chiron, a major producer of flu vaccine, announced it would not be able to distribute 46 million doses to the U.S., knocking out about half of the expected supply nationally. This lack of supply created a major vaccine shortage across the nation and here in Nebraska, leading to a crisis situation among healthcare providers and the public.

Target Audiences

- Public (direct and via media)
- Healthcare Providers
- Nebraska Health and Human Services System (HHSS) Employees

Planning

Immediate Goals – come up with plan to manage the vaccine shortage, communicate that plan to the public, local healthcare providers and HHSS employees.

Intermediate Goals – find out how much vaccine Nebraska would receive, let healthcare providers/public know its coming and get that vaccine into the arms of those who needed it most.

Long-term Goals – keep public/healthcare providers/HHSS employees updated as things changed since situation was extremely fluid.

Execution

Public via Media: news releases, news conferences, talking points, press packets, flu tips of the week, radio/television interviews, letters to the editor

Public Direct: website – fact sheets, frequently asked questions, prevention tips of the week, vaccine clinic info, news releases, and links to other flu-related sites; letter to concerned citizens and flu hotline

Healthcare Providers and Local Health Departments

Health Alert Network – an electronic network that allows us to communicate with healthcare providers across the state via e-mail and fax in urgent situations and for informational purposes.

Website – weekly flu reports, vaccine recommendations, HANs.

Board of Health Reports – report from the chief medical officer updating Healthcare providers with the latest flu information.

Professional Associations – partnered with local/national to help get word out

Results

- More than 400,000 flu shots were distributed across Nebraska.
- Nebraska was number two in the nation for getting flu vaccine into the arms of those at highest risk who wanted to be vaccinated, according to CDC.
- Nearly 100% of Nebraska's licensed nursing home residents were vaccinated along with healthcare workers in those facilities who provided hands-on patient care.
- Nebraska led the nation in responding to the shortage.
- Nebraska was recognized as a model in preparedness for flu by the CDC.
- 150 media contacts national and local