Pandemic Influenza Ethics Task Force

October 7, 2008

Purpose

- To provide a forum for discussion of ethical issues in pandemic influenza planning and preparedness

Background

- Since November 2005, a concerted national effort has been underway to plan for the possibility of a severe influenza pandemic
- All 50 states and many Federal government agencies have done extensive planning
- Many preparedness measures have been taken

Background

- South Carolina formed a Pandemic Influenza Coordinating Council, assessed preparedness and developed strategies:
  - Extensive state, regional and local planning
  - Information sharing meetings to promote awareness and preparedness
  - Multi-media public awareness campaign
  - Targeted multi-media campaigns and technical assistance
  - Stockpiles of antivirals, supplies and equipment
  - Detailed planning for medical surge
  - Expansion of disease surveillance and laboratory capabilities

National Summit Meeting, July 2008: Confronting the Ethics of Pandemic Influenza Planning

- National call for action
  - Enhance dialogue and partnering
  - Increase and improve education and training
  - Address policy needs

Some Ethical Issues in Pandemic Influenza Planning and Response

- Engaging communities in planning and response
- Allocation of scarce resources
- Altered standards and places of care
- Rights and duties of health care workers
- Disparities in access to care
- Palliative care
- Needs of at-risk populations
- Appropriate community mitigation strategies
- Respecting cultural and religious practices in the face of mass fatalities

What have the states been doing?

- Wide range of activities to incorporate an ethical perspective into planning and preparedness measures

Altered standards of medical care

- Altered standards of care – Virginia

Rationing of scarce resources

- Allocation of ventilators – New York
- Allocating pandemic influenza vaccines – Minnesota

Community mitigation strategies

- Citizen's Voices on Pandemic Flu Choices – Georgia, Massachusetts, Nebraska, Oregon

Medical and legal issues

- Health care workers obligation to work – North Carolina
- Ethics and law – Indiana

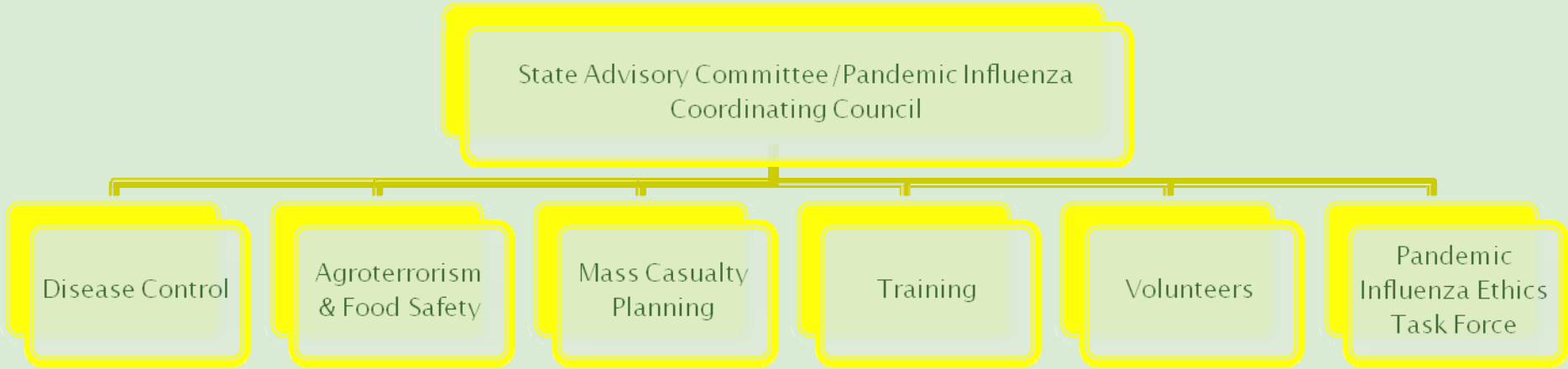
South Carolina's approach

- Progress in preparing emergency plans according to federal guidance
- Significant efforts in public awareness, printed information and video productions
- Stockpiling of antiviral medicines and infection control supplies
- Ventilator study done by the SC Society for Respiratory Care
- Planning for alternate care sites and use of mobile medical units
- Strengthening of disease surveillance and laboratory testing

Organization

- Under the auspices of the State Pandemic Influenza Coordinating Council
- Advisory body to the Department of Health and Environmental Control
- Pandemic Influenza Ethics Task Force to review plans and preparations, discuss ethical issues, produce guidance recommendations on major topics

Organization



Scope of Work

- One-year commitment to
  - Review plans and preparedness measures
  - Identify major ethical issues
  - Discuss ethical issues and principles
  - Gather broad public input
  - Prepare recommendations for guidelines
  - Consider legislative aspects

Tasks and Products

- Monthly Steering Committee Meetings
- Bi-Monthly Task Force Meetings
- Ad-hoc work groups on specific issues
- Forums for obtaining public input
- State Pandemic Influenza Ethics Summit meeting
- White paper with guidance and recommendations

Draft Timetable

- October 2008 – first Steering Committee meeting
- November 2008 – First Task Force meeting
- March 2009 – Public forums
- May 2009 – Draft paper
- May 2009 – State summit
- July 2009 – National summit
- August 2009 – Final paper
- October 2009 – Recommendations for draft legislation

DHEC Contacts

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