

Whatcom County Pandemic Influenza Task Force SOCIAL & ECONOMIC SUPPORT WORK GROUP

April 5, 2006 Meeting Summary

Social & Economic Support Work Group Core Issues

Members of the Social & Economic Support Work Group continued work on clearly defining Core Issues and identifying supporting tasks. Over the course of the next three months members will work to develop the following areas of information for the Core Issues that will be addressed during this phase of planning.

- Issue statements for each core issue, list of other issues and dilemmas to be addressed in future planning
- Statement of community capacity and existing resources for each core issue
- A compendium of existing plans with the purpose of closer integration
- Gaps, specifically identifying areas to expand existing capacity and thresholds of existing local resources
- Strategies for incrementally addressing gaps and contingency plans for expanding capacities to meet identified challenges.

A brief purpose statement for each core issue has been drafted along with the action plan for further information development and integrated planning. Work Group members are encouraged to support the ongoing work through discussions at the **Social & Economic Support Work Group's May 3, at 2:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.**, or contact your chair, Gary Williams or facilitation team with any additional information that will support progress on this work.

Economic Core Issues

1. Contingency Planning

Core Issue Purpose Statement: Help organizations, both private businesses and public agencies, that do not have any contingency planning in place, prepare for a possible pandemic influenza. Small businesses employ the majority of our community and provide a major portion of supplies. If small businesses are unable to operate, the economic and social impact on Whatcom County is very significant.

Status of Work: Contingency Planning is also a Core Issue for the Infrastructure & Organizational Contingency Planning Work Group. Social & Economic Support Work Group member, Shelly Zylstra, expressed interest in working on this issue. Following the April 18 Infrastructure Work Group meeting, the facilitation team will connect Shelley with appropriate Infrastructure Work Group members to collaborate on an integrated effort for developing and distributing contingency planning guidelines.

Next Steps for Social & Economic Support Work Group Members:

Shelly Zylstra will work with Infrastructure and Organizational Contingency Planning Work Group to:

1. Develop Whatcom County contingency planning guidelines—making use of existing templates and checklists.

2. Develop specific contingency planning guidelines that direct businesses to consider how the potential economic impacts on special populations will be addressed in their plan.
3. Craft key elements of the Whatcom County contingency planning message content and forward these to the Communications Work Group.

Other Work Groups contributing resources and information on this Core Issue:

- Infrastructure & Organizational Contingency Planning Work Group will compile existing templates and checklists for contingency planning. The Work Group will then customize and localize the information for Whatcom County.
- Infrastructure & Organizational Contingency Planning Work Group will develop key message content and recommendations for message delivery. These will be reviewed with the Social & Economic Support Work Group to assure the needs of vulnerable populations are addressed.
- The Communications Work Group will draft contingency planning community education messages and outreach strategies to all audiences identified by the Social & Economic Support Work Group.

2. Regional Business Round Tables

Core Issue Purpose Statement: Increase private and small businesses awareness of the value of contingency planning and provide educational resources to support these organizations to develop strategies for mitigating the economic impact of a possible pandemic influenza.

Status of Work: Work Group has developed the following initial list of questions and discussion topics to be addressed by businesses:

Business Round Table Questions and Discussion Topics

- a. How will businesses will handle consumer's ability or inability to pay due to a pandemic, especially for essential services such as: utilities, mortgages, rent and food supplies? Expect some community members' ability to pay will be impacted by loss of work and limited access to funds.
- b. What provisions can employers make for employees who are unable to work due to personal illness, family illness or childcare issues?
- c. What can business owners do to prepare to continue operations during a state of required quarantine in the case of a pandemic? What resources and infrastructure support do businesses need in order to maintain operations in the case of a quarantine directive?
- d. Discuss value of and outreach ideas for a contingency planning template for small businesses.

Initial target organizations to host round table discussions:

- a. Chambers of Commerce
- b. Small Business Development Center's Roundtables and customers
- c. Building & Industry Association of Whatcom County Associated General Contractors of Washington
- d. Sustainable Connections
- e. Unions

Next Steps for Social & Economic Support Work Group Members:

1. Work Group members Lou Piotrowski, Barbara Brenner and Gary Williams will develop an action plan for hosting round table discussions including: a list of organizations to host

round tables, recommended agenda and discussion format, objectives and desired results from round tables, and plan for documenting outcomes of discussions and identifying future work.

Other Work Groups contributing resources and information on this Core Issue:

- Infrastructure & Organizational Contingency Planning Work Group will compile a list of organizations providing Whatcom County's critical services in the case of pandemic influenza. In the Work Group's April 18 session members will develop action plans to determine community capacity and gaps of Whatcom County's critical services. This information will be provided to the Social & Economic Work Group during development to help identify what services are provided by small businesses and where in Whatcom County these service providers are located. This will assist the Social & Economic Support Work Group to have a clearer picture of the infrastructure support available to maintain operations during a pandemic.

Food and Shelter Core Issues

1. Emergency Preparation Education for Individual Homes

Core Issue Purpose Statement: Provide a single location for comprehensive emergency preparedness information targeted to individuals and individual homes. Our community's social and physical well being in the case of a pandemic will largely rely on the ability of individuals to take care of themselves. Although a lot of information already exists, and Work Group members recognize there is no way to ensure people will follow the advice, members believe it is of critical importance to make sure informative, quality information is made available to help individual households 'weather a long storm', such as a pandemic.

Status of Work: Jeff Margolis and Lyle Stork will provide the lead on this effort.

Next Steps for Social & Economic Support Work Group Members:

1. Members Jeff Margolis and Lyle Stork will:
 - Research and conduct outreach to community organizations, like the Red Cross, to compile an inventory of preparedness materials.
 - Develop information about food staples, what they are, why they are nutritious, how to stock and store, and how to cook from scratch.
 - Connect with other Task Force Work Groups to integrate 'preparedness' content and customize this for pandemic influenza as needed.
2. Group will identify single location for all printed and electronic preparedness content to reside. And will work with Communications Work Group for distribution of the information.

Other Work Groups contributing resources and information on this Core Issue:

1. Communications Work Group will help determine the best information distribution strategy to reach all target populations and to identify the agency or location for information to reside.

2. Plan for At-Risk Populations

Core Issue Purpose Statement: Ensure the community's large number of community service providers that serve at-risk populations are collaborating and planning for how these organizations will be called upon to mitigate the impact of a possible pandemic influenza on the populations they serve.

Status of Work: An inventory of existing community resources will be conducted by the Work Group to identify service providers, areas of service, and eligible populations. See the attached Community Resources inventory excel file developed by the facilitation team. Sue Anderson has volunteered to take the lead on this core issue.

Next Steps for Social & Economic Support Work Group Members:

1. All members will review the inventory and insert the service providers they are aware of that support specific populations.
2. Members will request information from colleagues and other organizations they routinely work with to increase knowledge on existing resources; this includes presenting a request for information at service provider meetings that members already attend as well as those their staff attend. Members are encouraged to forward the information request to other groups.
3. By April 26 members will send their information to Sue Anderson for compilation in time for the May 3 meeting.
4. Work Group members will look for opportunities to increase cooperation between community service providers and will develop an action plan for helping providers establish agreements to integrate resources in case of a pandemic.
5. Sue Anderson will identify a calendar of existing community service provider meetings at which the topic of Pandemic Influenza planning could be introduced.

Other Work Groups contributing resources and information on this Core Issue:

- Communications Work Group will use the Community Resources and vulnerable populations inventory to develop an outreach strategy for specific target audiences.

Psychological and Emotional Well Being and Support Core Issues

1. Neighborliness Campaign

Core Issue Purpose Statement: Help individuals, households and small communities build a base of connectedness and increase the cohesiveness of their community. The Work Group recognizes that it will be one's "community" that makes the difference in how individuals and households cope with and survive both physically and emotionally, in the case of a pandemic.

Status of Work: The Work Group members brainstormed variety of approaches to increasing neighborliness at the April 5 session. A small work group agreed to further develop this core issue and an action plan to guide its implementation, members are: Jeff Margolis, Barbara Brenner, and Sue Anderson with coordinating support from facilitation team member Alexandria Spaulding.

The following types of organizations could be helpful in developing connectedness and define a sense of community:

- Schools and school districts
- Native American Tribal Councils
- Water Districts
- Community stores
- Churches and faith-based organizations
- Libraries
- Fire halls
- Granges
- Neighborhood associations

- Planning department districts

Next Steps for Social & Economic Support Work Group Members:

1. Small work group will define scope and action plan for promoting neighborliness prior to May 3 meeting.
2. Small work group will contact other Task Force Work Groups working on related issues to increase integration and collaboration.

Other Work Groups contributing resources and information on this Core Issue:

- Legal & Ethical Considerations Work Group is developing guidelines to promote family plans within workplaces that are listed as part of the locally defined critical infrastructure system, with special attention to those that may not see themselves in that role (e.g., grocery store clerks). The guidelines can include suggestions for neighborhood response planning.

2. Private Mental Health Practitioners and Traditional Healers as Community Resource

Core Issue Purpose Statement: Connect with the many independent private mental health practitioners and traditional healers and identify those willing to be available as a resource in the case of a pandemic influenza. These individuals can expand capacity of other service providers serving the general community or the first responders and medical care workers that will likely be in need of emotional support.

Status of Work: Work Group will continue to develop an action plan on this core issue at the upcoming May meeting.

Next Steps for Social & Economic Support Work Group Members:

1. Identify individual(s) to work with Gary Williams on developing an action plan.
2. Action plan to include:
 - Identifying contact list of practitioners and healers
 - Develop key messages requesting their availability for emergency resource
 - Discuss with Legal & Ethical Considerations Work Group the framework for possible reciprocity
 - Collaborate with Communications Work Group on message distribution
 - Collaborate with Infrastructure & Organizational Contingency Planning Work Group on where and how to document available mental health resources for first responders and medical care workers

Questions for Other Work Groups

- Medical Care and Legal & Ethical Work Groups: What is the trigger point from business as usual? At what stage of a pandemic will businesses decide to close? What's discretionary on the part of the business owner? Will there be any mandates requiring certain businesses to remain open?
- Infrastructure & Organizational Contingency Work Group: Once a pandemic starts, what will be the support for the small county stores to help them maintain inventories?
- Infrastructure & Organizational Contingency Work Group: What is the threshold for maintaining delivery of critical services that will support the community's existing shelters and homes? At what point, if any, will homes lose power, gas, water, sewer, garbage, etc.
- Infrastructure & Organizational Contingency and Communications Work Groups: Will there be an agreement with KGMI to use that frequency for local radio news at a certain stage of an emergency? Currently after 8pm it is all national programming, this is the only local radio

frequency that reaches the eastern part of the county.

- Communications Work Group: Considering our whole county and the many population groups, please think out of the box when developing communications strategies. Consider additional methods besides traditional local media to get messages out. Not all populations get their information that way.
- Communications Work Group: Can you provide any guidelines on how to communicate in ways that mitigate the risk of panic in the community? What pre-emptive action can we take in how and when we communicate to minimize the possibility of panic?

Other Resource Information

- Gary Williams indicated that Western Washington University can provide economic impact data in the case of a pandemic influenza. Gary will explore what data might be valuable to the community and what the outcome might be of communicating such data.

Social and Economic Work Group Meeting Schedule

May 3, 2:00 – 4:00 p.m. Location: St. Luke’s Community Health Education Center

June 7, 2:00 – 4:00 p.m. Location: St. Luke’s Community Health Education Center

Social and Economic Support Work Group Members

In Attendance April 5, 2006

Ron Adams, Lummi Senior Services

Sue Anderson, Whatcom Coalition for Healthy Communities

Barbara Brenner, Whatcom County Health Board

Laverne Lane-Oreiro, Lummi Nation

Jeff Margolis, Lou Piotrowski, Foothills Economic Development Association

Jody McBee, Bellingham Housing Authority

Rosalie Scott

Lyle Stork, Rainbow Center

Gary Williams, Whatcom County Health Department

Shelly Zylstra, Northwest Regional Council

Social and Economic Support Work Group members not present April 5 are encouraged to select an area of interest.

Adrienne Hunter, Lummi Family Social Services

Glen Yorks, Nooksack River Casino

Alan Seid, Foothills Economic Development Association

John Harmon, Bellingham Housing Authority, *sent alternate*

Maureen Enegren, Red Cross Mt. Baker Chapter

Andrew Tuller, Lighthouse Mission

Diana Quinn, City of Everson

Gary Kenter, Nooksack River Casino

Dee West, Opportunity Council

David Tomlin, Lummi Nation Schools

Donny Weeks, Silver Reef Casino

Elisabeth Stark, Whatcom County

Buffi La Due, Whatcom County Health Department

Rick Nicholson, Whatcom Transportation Authority

Lynette Ondeck, Nooksack Valley School District

Susan Parker, Bellingham Technical College

Cheryl Tooker, Red Cross Mt. Baker Chapter