



Public Health Preparedness News

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DOH investigates liver failures

The Incident Command System (ICS) was put into real-life application recently when several Hawai'i residents were stricken with acute hepatitis and liver failure of unknown cause.

The life-threatening severity of the outbreak prompted the Hawai'i State Department of Health (DOH), Disease Outbreak Control Division (DOCD) to launch an immediate, full-scale investigation that continues today.

"We were concerned because these patients were younger, healthy adults with no predisposition for liver problems, but all had taken OxyElite Pro, a dietary supplement used for weight loss and muscle gain," said Dr. Sarah Park, State Epidemiologist and DOCD chief.

"We wanted to alert the public right away – even before we could prove a definitive link to OxyElite Pro – because more people could potentially become ill," she added.

DOH issued a Medical Advisory to clinicians statewide and Epi-X alert nationally, and requested assistance from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). DOH has also been collaborating with the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA), since OxyElite Pro is a federally regulated supplement

with national distribution.

Public Health Preparedness branch (PHP) set up the ICS to coordinate the epidemiologic investigation and practice the organizational skills needed for large-scale incidents.



Embargo: DOH Food and Drug inspectors visit a Honolulu retailer of OxyElite Pro dietary supplements.



"The Department's investigation is being conducted swiftly and thoroughly in collaboration with our federal partners at CDC and FDA," said Health Director Loretta Fuddy. "We appreciate the assistance of Hawaii's health care community, and the cooperation of retailers throughout the state. We hope this outbreak will alert Congress to the need for stronger regulation of dietary supplements to assure they are safe before they are sold."

As of press time, 49 cases of acute hepatitis and liver failure are being actively investigated. The outbreak has caused

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Apps for Emergencies

MyFamily

This app from healthfinder.gov can help you organize and update your family's prescriptions and other health priorities for easy access in an emergency.

http://lyfechannel.com/healthfinder_app

BioAgent Facts

This app from the Univ. of Pittsburgh Medical Center for Health Security provides easy-to-navigate info about the most common pathogens in an epidemic or biological weapon.

<https://itunes.apple.com/us/app/bioagent-facts/id468793480?mt=8>



Panic Button

Anytime, anywhere you're in trouble, press the RedPanic button. The app will send your GPS coordinates (as a Google Maps link) and address to every number on your panic contact list.

<http://www.redpanicbutton.com>

DOH investigates liver failures

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17 hospitalizations, two liver transplants, and one death.

Beyond the epidemiologic aspects of the investigation, DOCD also worked closely with the state Attorney General and DOH Environmental Health Service Division, Food and Drug Branch, to remove existing products from the market. In an Oct. 8 letter to retailers and distributors, DOH requested their voluntary removal from sale of all formulations of OxyElite Pro. The DOH also advised the public to discontinue using the products.

All OxyElite Pro formulations (about 331,696 capsules and 8,347 ounces of powder with a retail value of about

\$250,000) were later embargoed throughout the state, collected by DOH Field Inspectors, and will be destroyed under their direct supervision.

“We’re glad to report that main-



Statewide investigation: Dr. Sarah Park, State Epidemiologist and DOCD chief, speaks to newspaper and TV reporters on the liver failure outbreak.

land supplies of OxyElite Pro are now being recalled by the manufacturer,” noted Gary Gill, Deputy Director, DOH Environmental Health Administration.



Protecting the public: Peter Oshiro, DOH Environmental Health Program Manager, and Loretta Fuddy, DOH Director, with OxyElite Pro products seized from O’ahu retailers.

“The FDA will oversee the destruction of warehouse stocks, with a retail value of about \$22 million.”

In response to clinician, media and public attention on the outbreak, PHP and DOCD have posted “Frequently Asked Questions” and other material on their websites. Visit <http://health.hawaii.gov/docd> for information from DOH, CDC and FDA.

PHP at Safe Communities Day

Keiki, tweens, teens, even parents lined up to play “Disaster! The Game” during Celebrate Safe Communities Day, held November 2 at Leeward Community College.

DOH Public Health Preparedness (PHP) staff and Medical Reserve Corps (MRC) volunteers were on hand for the 2nd annual event, sponsored by the Attorney General’s office as part of the Leeward Discovery Fair.

To play the game, participants threw a Velcro-lined ball onto a dartboard divided into four Emergency Preparedness zones.



Engaging the community: West O’ahu residents try their hand at “Disaster! The Game” to win a Personal Emergency Kit drawstring backpack.

Depending on where the ball landed, the player was quizzed on 1) disasters that could strike Hawaii, 2) important items for an Emergency Supply Kit, 3) food safety during a blackout, or 4) storing water for your family.

To reward their efforts, players won a “Personal Emergency Kit” drawstring backpack. Each question-and-answer exchange was an opportunity to build awareness and suggest important actions that players, families, and friends could take to prepare for a disaster.

In addition, PHP staff and MRC volunteers shared information about the MRC, handed out “Plan 9” (essential items for an emergency) brochures, “Plan to Be Ready” booklets, “How to Use Hand Sanitizer” flyers, and other health and emergency preparedness materials.

“Celebrate Safe Communities attracted over 4,000 people,” said Valerie Mariano, Chief of the Community and Crime Prevention Branch, Department of the Attorney General. “DOH Public Health Preparedness staff provided great information to families on ways to keep safe from natural disasters.”



Kaua'i DHO wins Governor's Award

The 2013 Governor's Awards, State Team of the Year Award, goes to ... (drum roll, please!) the Kaua'i District Health Office (KDHO) for its role in Tropic Care Kauai 2012!

KDHO received the award October 4 from Acting Governor Shan Tsutsui. The recognition honors State Executive Branch employees, managers, and work teams who exemplify the highest caliber of public service and dedication in serving the people of Hawaii. KDHO was previously selected as the Department of Health's top team and advanced to the running for the most honored team in the state.

Tropic Care Kaua'i 2012 ran from February 28 to March 9, 2012, with KDHO serving as the principal coordinating agency for the two-week Innova-

tive Readiness Training. IRTs provide military reservists with real-world, rapid deployment training in post-disaster medical response.

As a result of the Tropic Care Kaua'i 2012 Team's collaborative efforts, 400 reserve and active military medical personnel from around the country deployed to Kaua'i. More than 8,000 Kaua'i residents received more than 10,000 free procedures during the medical mission, valued in excess of \$7 million through a federally funded training program.

"From a preparedness perspective, this was an excellent opportunity for our staff and volunteers to exercise a broad range of communication and coordination skills while serving the community," said Tommy Noyes, Public Health Preparedness Planner.



Governor's 2013 Team of the Year: Acting Governor Shan Tsutsui (right) recognized Director of Health Loretta J. Fuddy (left) and the Tropic Care Kaua'i 2012 team, from left: Radine Fabro, Tommy Noyes, Toni Torres, Jackie Teves, Ena Emoto, and the Governor's Kaua'i representative Dennis Esaki.

Kaua'i steps up Stop Flu at School

The Kaua'i District Health Office (KDHO), supported by the Kaua'i Community College Nursing Program and the Kaua'i Medical Reserve Corps, coordinated a robust series of Stop Flu at School (SFAS) clinics across the island. Plans for this SFAS "season" included setting up clinics in 18 schools and inoculating 3,667 people – a 14% increase over last year's total.

Improving health in Kaua'i schools is a primary objective for KDHO staff: keeping students, teachers, and staff from getting sick and missing school. A significant secondary benefit of the SFAS program continues to be the training opportunity for nursing students. This year, 24 nursing students from Kaua'i Community College helped staff the clinics, some of whom went beyond the basic role of administering vaccines to assuming clinic management positions. Three instructors from the college supervised the students throughout the SFAS clinics.

"The students started off slow in their confidence, but by the end of each Stop Flu at School clinic, they had found their rhythm and their confidence had grown," said Maureen Tabura, MSN, RN, of the Nursing Department, Kaua'i Community College. "Both faculty and students have found this experience very beneficial in building up their knowledge base and clinical skills."



Win-win situation: Students from the Kaua'i Community College Nursing Program help administer the Stop Flu at School Program. From left: Darian Kam, Lisa Overmyer, Yvette Motilla, Richelle Andres, and Maureen Tabura, Assistant Professor of Nursing.

Maui vaccinates firefighters against hepatitis A, B viruses

In August, the Maui District Health Office (MDHO) and Maui Department of Fire and Public Safety (MDFPS) continued their annual, joint effort to provide new firefighter recruits with opportunities to receive their hepatitis B vaccinations.

The endeavor marks the 6th year of this partnership, in which hepatitis vaccinations have been provided by either MDHO staff or Maui County Health Volunteers (MCHV), a Medical Reserve Corps unit. During this period, more than 60 fire and public safety recruits, as well as Aircraft Rescue and Fire Fighting recruits (State airport fire personnel), have been vaccinated by either MDHO or MCHV health professionals.

On Maui, all firefighter recruits are required to show proof of hepatitis B vaccination. The hepatitis B vaccination is administered over three doses and provides indefinite protection. The

chosen product, TWINRIX, provides protection against both hepatitis A and B infections.

"We are thankful to the MDHO for

providing staffing to assist in our infectious disease program," said Matthew Mann, medical officer with the Health and Safety Bureau of MDFPS.



Hepatitis protection: MCHV volunteer Priscilla Bratland, RN, vaccinates Casey Morisaki and other firefighters during the Hepatitis Vaccination Clinic for Maui Fire Recruits. For this annual event, held at the MDFPS main training center in Kahului, the Maui Fire Department purchases the vaccine and Maui District Health Office provides the vaccinators.

Maui conducts Stop Flu at School at Pu'u Kukui School

Staff of Maui District Health Office met with Maui County Health Volunteers (Medical Reserve Corps) and clinic staff of Pu'u Kukui School to administer the Stop Flu at School program.

Clinic manager and public health nurse Bethany Legin (sitting with red vest) oversaw operations that vaccinated about 260 students and staff at the newly built school in Wailuku.

Pu'u Kukui School staff were joined by MCHV members Linda Decker (front, center), Priscilla Bratland (second row, far left), Flo Saito-Sandell (second row, far right), and Gigi Olsten (second row, third from left), who retired in December 2012 as Public Health Nurse supervisor.

Gigi vaccinated her granddaughter, who is a student at Pu'u Kukui Elementary.





Spotlight on the

HAWAI'I MEDICAL RESERVE CORPS



MRC tests the Intermedix response system

The O'ahu, Maui, Kaua'i, Hawai'i (Big Island) and Pacific Islands units of the Medical Reserve Corps (MRC) participated October 29-30 in a nationwide exercise by Intermedix. Intermedix is the technology provider of the Responder Management System that is used by DOH for tracking, notification, and alerting of its Medical Reserve Corps volunteers.

The objective of the Intermedix Autumn Charge Exercise IV was to assess the overall capability of Hawaii's Responder Management System, called Na Lima Kako'o. The exercise also tested the capability of Intermedix to support large-scale and multi-state activation.

The exercise began with a briefing via conference call prior to the start of a disaster scenario. Local and system administrators were then provided with the scenario: severe storms had caused severe flooding and a high demand for immunizations. Participants utilizing the Na Lima Kako'o system were asked to complete multiple tasks within a specified period of time: create a local mission (to staff several point-of-distribution sites), coordinate deployments, notify volunteers, and prepare deployment assignments.

"The Na Lima Kako'o system is still in its early stage of utilization by both local administrators and volunteers, so the exercise was a valuable opportunity for administrators to learn, understand, and practice emergency response procedures," said Marilyn Sandvig, Distance Learning Coordinator, Public Health Preparedness Branch, who coordinated participation in Hawaii.



Test drive: PHP and MRC review the Na Lima Kako'o Responder Management System.

Big Island vaccinates 10,200+

The Hawaii Department of Health (DOH), Hawaii District Health Office (HDHO) staff were joined by Big Island Medical Reserve Corps (MRC) volunteers to conduct Stop Flu at School (SFAS) clinics at 57 elementary and intermediate grade level schools around the island.

An estimated 10,200+ students and school staff were vaccinated in this year's 2013 SFAS program, which ran from October 15 to November 27. HDHO benefited from more than 70 donated hours of volunteer time by seven Big Island MRC members, three of whom were registered nurses and could administer the vaccines at the clinics. The other four MRC members volunteered in flow control, logistics, or registration positions.

The Stop Flu at School program is designed to improve the health of Hawaii's keiki, teachers, families, and community by preventing the spread of influenza (flu) through vaccination. Through SFAS, children at participating elementary and middle schools are offered FREE flu vaccines at school, during the school day.



The Hawaii Medical Reserve Corps (MRC) helped staff Stop Flu at School (SFAS) clinics from October-November. Members helped with registration and vaccination.

During this busy time, Oahu MRC members were also able to help with several vision clinics in collaboration with the Oahu Lions Club. Kauluwela, Kalihi Waena, and Kapalama elementary schools benefited from this important community health service.