

WYOMING CHAPTER OF ARMA INTERNATIONAL
Chapter Meeting
February 10, 2009
Barrett Building Multi-Purpose Room

Please Note: These minutes are abridged.

Members Present: Kristy Anderson, Mary Bausserman, Mark Browne, Rico Childers, Ramona Christensen, Donna Crock, Lisa Hastings, Wendy Kinkade, Debbie Leonard, Kathy Levasseur, Pat Newbern, Barb Thomasee, Tim Tyler, Deanne Widauf, Rich Wilson, Donna Wright.

Guests: Debbie Huffer, Jennifer Mickle, Lisa Olson, Becky Wooldridge.

Speaker: Paul Knett, Public Health Response Coordinator, Laramie County Health Department.

Topic: Pandemic Flu

Meeting was called to order: By President Pat Newbern at 11:41 a.m.

Pat welcomed everyone, asked everyone introduce herself (or himself) then introduced the speaker, Paul Knett, Public Health Response Coordinator with Laramie County Health Dept.

Mr. Knett gave a very interesting and informative presentation on the Pandemic Flu. He explained the Pandemic Flu is a severe upper respiratory disease accompanied with fever and dry cough, that it did not include intestinal distress or diarrhea, and that it could become severe and can cause death in as few as two days. The three types of flu are: Seasonal Flu (common flu), Avian Bird Flu, and Pandemic flu (worldwide). Paul warned it is not a matter of if, but when a pandemic will occur. He explained that Pandemic Flu influenza is a global outbreak of the influenza viral disease from a newly mutated influenza virus. Most people will have little or no immunity because people have not been infected with the newest mutated virus in the past. There is no vaccine, although he explained that the 4 most common flu types each flu season are used to develop vaccine for the following year. It takes 6 months to make the vaccine. Once a pandemic virus develops it can spread rapidly throughout the world. The Center for Disease Control estimates that as much as 25 to 30 percent of the United States population could be affected. Scientists are watching the HN51 (bird flu) virus. Scientists believe the Pandemic Flu is most likely to start in Europe or Asia so the United States might have some warning. To help prevent the spread of a flu virus you should cough into your sleeve and wash your hands frequently for at least 20 seconds. Antibiotics do not work for a viral flu infection. Antibiotics only work bacterial infections.

Paul discussed what we have learned about the three Pandemics that have occurred to date. The pandemic of 1918 was the most severe on record; Over 50 million people around the world died, including more than 500,000 Americans. There were also Pandemics in 1957 and 1968. Paul then showed a video on the 1918 Pandemic in the United States where one in every 4 people got sick. There were 3 waves of this flu, which crippled our country. There was simply not enough medical or health care available including Hospital rooms, or health care providers. Even Dentists were authorized as physicians. Interestingly, the first case was in Lusk, Wyoming!

The state of Wyoming and Laramie County are unique in that preparations for the Pandemic Flu have put us above the curve. There is a small stockpile of medication, local Medical services, Emergency Management, Fire Rescue, and even the coroner's offices have a Pandemic Flu Response Plan (including a plan for storing of the deceased). Paul explained how we are the first generation in history that has the ability to plan for and combat a pandemic outbreak. In comparison, Paul described how the cities of Philadelphia and St. Louis handled the Pandemic Flu of 1918. Philadelphia allowed public gatherings and kept schools open; There were 17 deaths per 1000 people. St Louis cancelled public gatherings and closed schools; There were 4 deaths per 100 people.

It is estimated when a pandemic occurs there will only be enough medicine to cover 20 percent of the population. One of the most important things we need to know is how to care for ourselves and our families. Everyone should be prepared for an emergency. Our homes and work places should have an "emergency plan" and a disaster kit. Everyone should know how to shut their utilities off, where to go in an emergency and have enough supplies to last 3 days. An emergency kit (and supplies) should include (but are not limited to): 1 gallon of water per person for each day, medications, money, food, important documents, duct tape and plastic. He also urged everyone to sign up for **CodeRED**, which is our local emergency information system that delivers a pre-recorded emergency message directly to homes and businesses. Paul urged everyone to go on-line to LaramieCounty.com, click on **CodeRED**, and enter your address & telephone number.

Paul showed a video titled "Why Don't We Just Do It In Our Sleeves", which showed and explained the correct way to cough or sneeze so bacterial *and* viral germs are not spread. In closing, Paul answered questions and then handed out information about disaster preparedness and Frequently Asked Questions regarding the Pandemic Influenza.

Meeting was adjourned at 12:48 p.m.

Respectfully submitted by:
Debbie Leonard
Secretary