


The Pump Handle



"I had an interview with the Board of Guardians of St. James's parish, on the evening of Thursday, 7th September, and represented the above circumstances to them. In consequence of what I said, the handle of the pump was removed on the following day."

John Snow, 1855

September 2004 Topics

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Influenza Vaccine Shortage

Vaccine clinics in North Dakota have been delayed since influenza vaccine from Chiron Corporation will not be available in the United States for the 2004-05 influenza season. Chiron was expected to supply approximately half the doses of flu vaccine in the United States before the company's license to manufacture Fluvirin vaccine was unexpectedly suspended for three months. Remaining supplies of the vaccine produced by Aventis Pasteur Inc., Fluzone[®], and the live, attenuated vaccine manufactured by MedImmune, FluMist[®], are the only vaccines currently available.

Current recommendations of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) for priority groups to be vaccinated for influenza include:

- Adults age 65 years and older
- Children age 6 through 23 months
- People age 2 to 64 years with underlying chronic medical conditions
- Women who will be pregnant during the flu season
- Residents of nursing homes and long-term care facilities
- Children age 6 months to 18 years on chronic aspirin therapy
- Health-care workers involved in direct patient care
- Out-of-home caregivers and household contacts of children younger than 6 months

The North Dakota Department of Health (NDDoH) is working with public and private providers to assess the state's vaccine supply and to assist in the coordination of influenza vaccination.

Influenza surveillance began Oct. 1, 2004. Schools, sentinel providers and laboratories report influenza activity in their area to the North Dakota Department of Health. Surveillance information is updated weekly on the NDDoH Disease Control website at www.ndflu.com/.

For more information, contact Melissa Casteel, Influenza Surveillance coordinator, at 800.472.2180 or email at mcasteel@state.nd.us.



Opt-Out Prenatal HIV Testing

Opt-out testing is the current recommendation of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) for increasing prenatal HIV testing rates. A newsletter article prepared by the CDC entitled "Routine Prenatal Testing – Opt-Out Approach" explains the differences between opt-in and opt-out prenatal HIV testing. Health professionals and policy makers are encouraged to adopt opt-out testing as a standard of care.

A letter from the NDDoH to health-care providers about opt-out testing is available by [clicking here](#). For more information about opt-out testing, several other materials are available on the CDC's website at www.cdc.gov/hiv/projects/perinatal/guidelines.htm.



Meet the New Field Epidemiologist

Name: Rachel Hanson

Health Unit: Grand Forks Public Health

Education Background: BA biology, anthropology at Luther College, Decorah, Iowa, and MPH epidemiology at the University of Minnesota

Past Experience: "I worked at the Minnesota Department of Health on "Team Diarrhea" conducting surveillance on enteric pathogens and as a research assistant for the Minnesota Organization of Fetal Alcohol Syndrome and the Lao Family Community, an organization for teen pregnancy prevention in the Hmong community in St. Paul, Minn. I also began research at the University of Melbourne in Victoria, Australia, on refugee health issues."

Family/Hobbies: "I am getting married next summer to my fiancé, Pete, who is from Australia. I enjoy swimming and cross-country skiing."



Viral Hepatitis Coordinator



Viral hepatitis is an emerging public health problem. Recognizing the increasing threat of hepatitis-causing viruses, such as hepatitis C virus, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has provided funding for all 50 states to employ hepatitis coordinators. Kimberly Weis, MPH, has been hired as the North Dakota viral hepatitis coordinator. Kim's responsibilities will involve integrating hepatitis prevention and control activities into existing public health programs.

Meet the Epidemiologist

Name: Kimberly Weis

Health Unit: State health office in Bismarck, N.D.

Education Background: “My education consists of an MPH in epidemiology from the University of Minnesota and a BS in biochemistry/molecular biology from the University of Minnesota Duluth.”

Past Experience: “Previous experience includes working for the University of Minnesota, where I served as a project manager/coordinator for two cardiovascular genetic epidemiology studies and several cardiovascular clinical trials. Prior to that, I worked at 3M, where I was involved in the development of assays for the rapid detection of bacteria in food.”

Hobbies/family: “I was born and raised in Bismarck, so it’s nice to be home after being away for 10 years. My hobbies include walking/hiking, traveling, reading and spending time with my husband and infant daughter.”



Prevention and Control of Antibiotic-Resistant Organisms

The North Dakota Drug-Resistant Organisms Work Group has completed the document "Recommendations for the Prevention and Control of Antibiotic-Resistant Organisms in North Dakota." The document is available to download, print and distribute as necessary on the NDDoH Disease Control website at

www.health.state.nd.us/disease/Resources/ResourcesMain.htm.

Comments regarding the recommendations may be sent to Larry Shireley at:

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Anniversary of the Pump Handle

September 8 was the 150th anniversary of John Snow and the pump handle. In 1854, London experienced a recurrent epidemic of cholera. At this time, medical authorities believed that cholera became aerosolized and spread from person to person by breathing the same air. Dr. Snow reviewed death records of patients who died of cholera, interviewed household members, plotted the cases on maps and learned that most of the deceased had lived near and had drunk water from a specific city water pump.

When Dr. Snow expressed to local authorities that the cholera was not infecting people through air, but instead through the water in a well located in the center of the district where disease was most prevalent, they removed the pump handle of the well so that residents could no longer draw water from it. When they did, the spread of cholera dramatically dropped and the epidemic soon subsided, proving Dr. Snow’s theory to be correct. The techniques and logic portrayed by Dr. Snow while investigating the etiology of cholera during this epidemic is the foundation of skills that epidemiologists still use today.

“The Pump Handle Award” of the Council of State and Territorial Epidemiologists is given annually for outstanding achievement in the field of applied epidemiology.

Contributing authors of The Pump Handle include Karin Mongeon, Julie Goplin, Tracy Miller, Kirby Kruger and Larry Shireley. For questions, suggestions or inquiries, or to be removed from the mailing list, please contact Julie Goplin of the Division of Disease Control at 701.238.2375 or by email at jgoplin@state.nd.us.

The pump handle picture in the title was obtained from the website www.ph.ucla.edu/epi/snow.html.



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