



COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO

NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE PUBLICATION

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PLAN. PREPARE. PROTECT.

PANDEMIC FLU CAMPAIGN KICKS OFF IN SAN DIEGO COUNTY

Educational Campaign Encourages Public to Plan Ahead for Possible Flu Pandemic

The San Diego County Health and Human Services Agency (HHSA) has joined with County, business, school, and community partners in a public education campaign designed to encourage planning ahead for the possibility of a pandemic flu.

The Pandemic Flu Education Campaign launched May 23 at the County Administrative Center, 1600 Pacific Highway, San Diego. The campaign motto, "Plan. Prepare. Protect." will be visible throughout San Diego County, in a series of television and radio public service announcements, and in advertisements on buses, in the San Diego Airport, on billboards and in movie theatres.

"History shows us a pandemic flu could happen again," said Supervisor Roberts, who with the San Diego County Board of Supervisors has spearheaded preparation efforts. During the kick-off, Roberts was joined by Paula Landau-Cox, Director of Operations, HHSA, Wilma Wooten, M.D., M.P.H., Interim County Public Health Officer; Nikos Gurfield, D.V.M., County Veterinarian; Carey Storm, Director of Operations, Qualcomm; and Wayne Sakamoto, Lead Coordinator, Safe Schools Program, San Diego County Office of Education.

"We're bringing together all elements of the community to provide support and help San Diego County be ready for this kind of health emergency," added Roberts.

The campaign includes resource tool kits for businesses, schools, and the public to help them in their preparations.

"The kit has helped us focus on crucial aspects of preparedness and protection, such as employees working from home," said Carey Storm of Qualcomm. "There are many questions we have begun to consider, and the kit gives us resources and ideas."

"Social distancing measures, such as keeping children home from school, may arise

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in the event of a pandemic,” said Wayne Sakamoto of County Office of Education. “We are working together with parents and the County to take steps to address this and other preparedness issues.”

The campaign also includes a soon-to-be-instituted Ambassador program, which trains individuals to teach others about planning for a pandemic flu and measures to take to protect against the spread of respiratory illness.

“Plan. Prepare. Protect. are good watchwords year round, whether or not there is a pandemic flu,” said Dr. Wooten. “For example, we urge the public to cover their cough and stay home when they are sick to help prevent the spread of seasonal flu, among other things.”

The Pandemic Flu Education Campaign is one of several efforts by the County to prepare for a possible pandemic flu, which could happen if the avian (bird) flu became easily transmissible from human to human. There are currently no cases of avian flu in the United States and there is no pandemic flu worldwide.

For more information on pandemic flu, go to the County of San Diego Pandemic Flu website, www.sdpanicflu.org.

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