

Communication and pandemic in Finland

Nordic Health Preparedness Conference

Sanna Leinonen 17/11/2009

Information and Communication Unit of the Ministry of Social Affairs and Health (14)

Director of Information and Communication (1)

Secretary (1)

Media relationships (5,5)

- Head of Information
- Information Officer
- Communication Secretary

Web information and publications (6,5)

- Web Editor-in-Chief
- Web Information Officer
- Network Services Secretary
- Publications Coordinator
- Communication Secretary
- Assistant Editor

Main questions to be answered?

- Q: Who is responsible for delivering information?
- A: Ministry of Social Affairs and Health (MSAH)
+ National Institute for Health and Welfare (NIHW)
+ counties + municipalities (health centres)
(according to a National preparedness plan for an influenza pandemic, 2006)

Main questions to be answered?

- Q: How to get reliable and real-time information nationally and globally?
- A: In Finland NIHW is responsible for collecting and reporting information of communicable diseases. For the present pandemic, a co-ordinating group was established consisting also of communication professionals. After the “Mexico outbreak” in April 2009, building the network between the information officers of the MSAH, other Ministries (e.g. Defence, Education), hospitals, counties and research institutes. European network of information officers for exchanging information.

Main questions to be answered?

- Q: How to inform the citizens?
- A: Active media plan was encountered and launched in April 2009 (Press conferences and press releases when needed). “Ask about influenza” -line was opened (May 5th) and closed (June 10th) and opened again in July 23rd. Wash your hands -TV spot and outdoor campaign (posters for preventing the infection) were launched.

Time schedule/actions of pandemic communication in Finland

- **Web sites** of new influenza was opened (MSAH and NIHW)
- Between April 27th and May 4th, daily **press conference** at 3 pm either in MSAH or NIHW
- **Press releases** when needed during summer months
- **Hot line** “Ask about the influenza” since May 5th
- Preparing to the opening of the schools (August 5th): **Posters, TV-spots, instructions to schools**

Future aspects

- Vaccinations (TV-spot, campaign?)
- Treatment, local authorities are responsible for action and communication
- Peak expected in autumn

Thank you for your attention!