


Pandemic Influenza Preparedness: Domestic Working Group Pandemic Project

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Overview

- Background
- Domestic Working Group Pandemic Project
- Portland City Auditor's Pandemic Audit
- GAO's Pandemic Work
- Implications for Auditors
- Portland City Auditor's Participation in TOPOFF 4 Exercise

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What is an Influenza Pandemic?

- Occurs when a new flu virus emerges for which there is little or no immunity in the human population. It can spread easily person-to-person around the globe.
- Number of U. S. deaths could be high (200,000-1.9 million).
- Likely to come in waves, each lasting months, and pass through communities of all sizes.
- Could threaten critical infrastructure by removing essential personnel from the workplace (up to 40% absenteeism rate during peaks) for weeks or months.


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National Strategy for Pandemic Influenza

The Homeland Security Council developed the National Strategy to guide preparedness and response to a flu pandemic with the intent of:

- Stopping, slowing, or otherwise limiting the spread of a pandemic to the U.S.
- Limiting the domestic spread of a pandemic and mitigating disease, suffering, and death,
- Sustaining infrastructure and mitigating impact to the economy and the functioning of society.



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National Implementation Plan for Pandemic Influenza

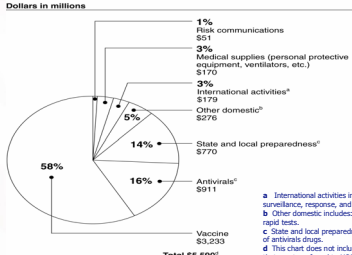
- Recognizes primary responses to a pandemic will come from states and local communities
- Lays out expectation that states and communities should have pandemic plans and conduct pandemic exercises
- Out of 324 action items, 81 involve state and local governments

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Pandemic Influenza Supplemental Appropriations, FY 2006


Dollars in millions



Category	Percentage	Amount (Dollars in millions)
Vaccine	58%	\$3,233
Antivirals ^a	16%	\$911
State and local preparedness ^c	14%	\$770
Other domestic ^b	6%	\$276
International activities ^a	3%	\$179
Medical supplies (personal protective equipment, ventilators, etc.)	3%	\$170
Risk communications	1%	\$51
Total		\$5,590^d

Source: GAO, HHS.

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Domestic Working Group (DWG) Projects

- DWG created by the Comptroller General in 2001
 - Heads of 18 (6 federal, 6 state, 6 local) audit offices
 - Prototype for knowledge sharing and collaboration

- Previous Projects
 - Parallel audits related to “No Child Left Behind Act”—GAO, Department of Education IG, Philadelphia and Texas audit offices
 - Grant accountability guide—EPA IG and others

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DWG Pandemic Project

- Project Goal—To collaborate and partner on state and local activities that will contribute to the nation’s efforts to prepare for and respond to a possible influenza pandemic.

- As auditors, we can draw on both past experience and prospective review to:
 - Enhance sound planning and preparedness
 - Help ensure that investments and activities will stand us in good stead – whether a pandemic emerges or not
 - Strengthen our networks, contributing to our overall infrastructure for emergency preparations and response

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DWG Pandemic Project Members


GAO’s Pandemic Working Group—Bernice Steinhardt, Sarah Veale, Maya Chakko, Susan Sato, Judith Kordahl, Strategic Issues, and others

Rhode Island Auditor General Office—Ernest Almonte, Auditor General and Raymond Coderre

Portland City Auditor—Gary Blackmer, Portland City Auditor, Drummond Kahn, Director of Audit Services

Multnomah County, Oregon—LaVonne Griffin-Valade, Multnomah County Auditor

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DWG Pandemic Project Members, cont.


New York Office of the State Comptroller—Lynn Canton, Deputy Comptroller, Bill Challice, Audit Director, Al Kee, Health Audit Manager, and Todd Seeberger

Kansas City’s Auditor’s Office—Deborah Jenkins and Sharon Kingsbury

Illinois Office of the Auditor General—William Holland, Auditor General, Jim Schlouch, Director, Performance Audits and Ameen Dada

City of Orlando Office of Internal Audit—Beryl Davis, Audit and Evaluation Director


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How We Have Worked Together in the Pandemic Project

- Shared information on influenza pandemic
- Shared methodologies, tools and common criteria
- Conducted coordinated state and local audits that assessed pandemic flu preparedness efforts and identified gaps that need to be addressed on a nationwide basis
 - City of Portland, Oregon
 - City of Kansas City, Missouri
 - New York State and New York City (in progress)
 - GAO’s audit of state and local pandemic planning and exercising from a national perspective

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Key Questions for Audits of State and Local Pandemic Preparedness

- How has the state or city prepared for a pandemic flu, and in what ways have efforts involved other entities, such as governments, nonprofits, private sector?
- Has the state or city conducted any pandemic-specific exercises? If so, what were the lessons learned and how were they incorporated into planning and preparedness?

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Key Questions for Audits of State and Local Pandemic Preparedness

- What challenges has the state or city encountered in preparing for a pandemic flu? Have solutions to those challenges been identified and implemented?
- In its planning efforts, has the state or city identified any gaps or challenges the federal government could help address as the state or city prepares for a pandemic flu?

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Portland City Auditor's Pandemic Audit

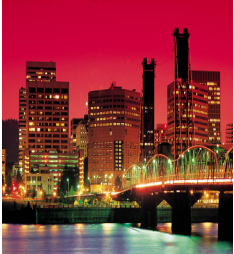
- Our work resulted in a report, published in March 2007 and covered in local media;
<http://www.portlandonline.com/shared/cfm/image.cfm?id=149557>
- Also available through our website,
www.portlandonline.com/auditor/auditservices
- Good coverage and public discussion of results

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About Portland


- Portland is Oregon's largest city, with almost 600,000 City residents and a metro population of almost 1.5 million
- On two large interstate freeways
- Nonstop flights to Asia and Europe
- Large West Coast port and shipping operations



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Four Questions




Are City officials aware of the plan's provisions and expectations?

Which City officials did Federal officials involve in the plan?

Did City identify information needs, gaps, or concerns?


Is City addressing actions and criteria in the implementation plan?

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Audit Steps

- We contacted 22 responsible City officials, representing emergency management, police, fire, transportation, emergency communications, and water
- Health is typically a County, not a City, responsibility.



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Results of Portland's Pandemic Audit

- City officials generally aware of national pandemic flu plans
- The most-responsible City bureaus were also the most aware and coordinated
- Good coordination and planning with County government
- Steps taken to implement pandemic flu plan as of early 2007

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Steps Taken

- Fire and Emergency Management participated in a Flu Summit in 2006
- Info on pandemic flu sent to all City employees
- State-wide planning exercises
- Continuity of Operations planning



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Other Positive Aspects



- Key City Bureaus already have national NIMS incident training
- Central City coordination through Emergency Mgmt
- Individual Bureau initiatives and plans for continuity
- Awareness of lead roles

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Concerns / Negative Aspects

- Slow business continuity planning for employees
- Low Federal involvement – “you’re on your own”
- Lack of coordination between Federal, State, and Locals
- Unfunded or unclear mandates, like “social distancing”



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Additional Concerns


- City officials with expertise expressed specific concerns about the federal plan and its possible results –
 - Will the State of Oregon have sufficient levels of anti-viral medicines?
 - Will hospital and emergency facility capacity be sufficient to manage needs in an outbreak?
 - Will vaccine distribution mechanisms be adequate?

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Conclusions from Portland's Pandemic Audit


- Planning is underway and understood
- Forewarned is forearmed
- Some concerns remain for complete preparedness
- Exercises and planning continue
- Results useful for other sorts of disasters, too



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Next Steps



- City efforts and preparedness can model and benchmark for other Cities and show early results of Federal planning
- Can share work with others and benefit from their efforts
- Truly a Forum issue!

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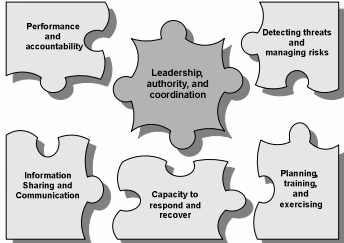
GAO's Pandemic Strategy

- An integrated, agency-wide effort intended to help the U.S. prepare for a pandemic in ways that are sustainable over the long-term
- Builds on lessons learned from prior emergencies, such as Hurricanes Andrew and Katrina, Y2K, SARS, and 9/11
- Reflects congressional interests
- Provides the opportunity for collaboration and partnerships that enhances our knowledge in areas such as key intergovernmental issues and relationships

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GAO's Pandemic Strategy Themes



Source: GAO


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GAO's Work on Influenza Pandemic Preparedness—Results

- Over the past two years, GAO has issued 10 reports, and 2 testimonies on influenza pandemic preparedness. We have 4 other reviews in progress, and one upcoming "capping" report of our work.
- 8 of these products contain recommendations—for a total of 26 recommendations.
- Responsible federal agencies, primarily the Departments of Health and Human Services and Homeland Security, have generally agreed with our recommendations.
- 5 of these 26 recommendations have been acted-upon, 21 have not yet been addressed.


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GAO's Work on Influenza Pandemic Preparedness—Key Themes

- Every state and a number of local communities have pandemic plans, but many still have gaps in areas such as community containment and medical surge capacity. States and localities asking for additional guidance from the federal government in some of these same areas.
- States and localities have conducted pandemic influenza exercises, but leadership roles and responsibilities still haven't been tested at the national level.
- Mechanisms for collaboration and coordination for pandemic preparedness exist, but could be better utilized (Federal Executive Boards, critical infrastructure coordinating councils, federal pandemic regions for state and local outreach).


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Looking Ahead

- Purpose of DWG's Pandemic Influenza Project was to share information, tools and methodologies that audit offices could use to assess their own local pandemic preparedness.
- Other states and local governments could do similar audits of their own pandemic preparedness.


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Looking Ahead, cont.

- Sustained attention on preparedness for an influenza pandemic at all levels of government remains vital:
 - Disaster fatigue
 - Presidential transition and changes in leadership
- Lessons learned, methodologies, tools and other resources are available to be used by audit communities across the countries, posted on www.auditforum.org


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**Top Officials 4 (TOPOFF 4) Exercise—
Inside View from Portland City Auditor**

- Full Scale Exercise—took place on October 15-19, 2007
 - City, County, State, Federal participants, and non-government agencies
 - Dirty bomb explosion at a Light Rail station near the central business district
 - Dispersal of radioactive materials required immediate sheltering-in-place


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Pandemic parallels

- Public health issue
- Multi-agency response
- Emergency worker exposures


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Role of Portland City Auditor

- Disaster Policy Council
 - (Mayor, Police, Fire, Attorney, CAO, Auditor, Transportation, Water, Emergency Mgmt.)
- Basic ICS online training from FEMA
- Non-auditing observer/participant


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Auditors and emergencies

- Observations, not an audit


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Auditors and emergencies, cont.

- Excess capacity becomes a critical need in an emergency
- But audits may trim capacity


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Auditors and emergencies, cont.

- Redundancy can be critical in an emergency
- But audits tend to promote efficiencies by reducing duplication and centralizing functions


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Auditors and emergencies, cont.

- Communications will always be a primary cause of problems
- But a tough area to adequately audit


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Auditors and emergencies, cont.

- Cooperation will always be a primary cause of problems
- But a tough area to effectively audit

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Auditors and emergencies, cont.

- Leadership is a primary key to successful emergency responses
- But a tough area to effectively audit


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Resources

- *Influenza Pandemic: Federal Agencies Should Continue to Assist States to Address Gaps in Pandemic Planning.* GAO-08-539. June 19, 2008.
- *Emergency Preparedness: States Are Planning for Medical Surge, but Could Benefit from Shared Guidance on Allocating Scarce Medical Resources.* GAO-08-668. June 13, 2008.
- *Influenza Pandemic: Opportunities Exist to Address Critical Infrastructure Protection Challenges That Require Federal and Private Sector Coordination.* GAO-08-36. October 31, 2007.
- *Influenza Pandemic: Further Efforts Are Needed to Ensure Clearer Federal Leadership Roles and an Effective National Strategy.* GAO-07-781. August 14, 2007.
- *The Federal Workforce: Additional Steps Needed to Take Advantage of Federal Executive Boards' Ability to Contribute to Emergency Operations.* GAO-07-515. May 4, 2007.

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Resources, cont.

- City Auditor's Office, City of Kansas City, Missouri, *Performance Audit: Pandemic Flu Preparedness* (October 2007).
- Office of City Auditor, Portland, Oregon, *Pandemic Flu Planning: City bureaus aware of national plans, A Report from the City Auditor* (March 2007).

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