Spectrum Health

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SPECTRUM HEALTH AVIAN FLU PREPAREDNESS
BEFORE THE JOINT MEETING OF THE
HOUSE HEALTH POLICY COMMITTEE AND
HOUSE AGRICULTURAL COMMITTEE
January 30, 2006

Good afternoon Chairman Gaffney, Chairman Nitz, members of the Committee, my name is Mark Lemoine, and I am the Director of Government Affairs for Spectrum Health. Spectrum Health is the largest healthcare provider in West Michigan with over 13,000 employees delivering healthcare to a service area which covers a population of 3 million Michigan residents.

On behalf of our Infection Control staff, I am pleased to provide you with a description of the steps Spectrum Health is taking to address pandemic preparedness.

Spectrum Health is pleased to be a part of a very coordinated effort here in West Michigan. Led by the Kent County Health department, we are offering our expertise to ensure that infection control and containment measures are in place, and adequate patient care can be provided.

To understand how we will respond to the Avian flu, let me first share the types of actions we currently perform, because we believe it is important to differentiate how we would approach Seasonal, Pandemic and Avian Influenza.

To prevent Seasonal Influenza, we will continue to provide opportunities for immunizations and offer community education on symptoms and prevention of transmission.

In the event of a pandemic outbreak, we are working with the Kent County Health department, and other area healthcare providers on developing a community plan. The preliminary plan includes the development of the following:

- ✓ A Common surveillance system for acute care hospitals to report to the county health department weekly numbers of patients with flu-like symptoms, and compare that to the

number of patients confirmed to have contracted the flu. This will provide a base-line/threshold to allow early detection for potential pandemic numbers within the city and would activate the plan.

- ✓ A triage process to coordinate all services, that will collaborate care not only within our respective facilities, but with all area acute care providers, and post-acute providers as well (e.g. nursing homes, assisted living).
- ✓ An effective communications plan to utilize the media, standardized massages for public communication, and the county health department. And;
- ✓ A distribution system to provide access to antivirals and immunizations

Spectrum Health and our partners in this endeavor recognize the necessity to increase clinical expertise and discussion of how this can be accomplished effectively.

Building upon the activities I've just described, our steps to prepare for a possible Avian flu pandemic include:

- ✓ Staff training throughout the region
- ✓ Continual review of updates from the Centers for Disease Control regarding new cases and the state of potential human-to-human transmissions by the Michigan Department of Community Health.
- ✓ Internally, we disseminate information we receive from the County Health department to our Emergency Departments and Infectious Disease physicians, and;
- ✓ We plan to follow the guidelines, currently being developed by Infection Control, for H5N1 testing, isolation, patient care, and notification to health departments.

Spectrum Health takes its role in this effort very seriously, and we are happy to partner with others in West Michigan as we prepare to provide health care to the entire community, should such an event occur.

Thank you for coming to West Michigan to discuss this important topic.