



**REGIONAL ALASKA TRIBAL HEALTH CORPORATION
ENHANCED COMMUNICABLE DISEASE SURVEILLANCE
GUIDELINE**

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ENHANCED COMMUNICABLE DISEASE SURVEILLANCE

Should the world experience another pandemic (or when the world experiences another pandemic) health agencies would implement an enhanced surveillance system.

Enhanced surveillance may also be implemented for other infectious disease threats such as TB, RSV, measles etc. when outbreaks of these diseases occur.

WHAT IS ENHANCED SURVEILLANCE? Surveillance systems are in place to monitor rates and trends of communicable diseases that have public health significance i.e. those that can cause morbidity and mortality. Enhanced surveillance is implemented when a communicable disease threat emerges. And when information on the number of cases and where they occur is needed for planning and implementation of preventive strategies.

Tracking the course of an epidemic through enhanced surveillance is essential for an effective response. That would include both health care delivery planning as well as implementing preventive strategies.

STATE OF ALASKA ENHANCED COMMUNICABLE DISEASE SURVEILLANCE: The Section of Epidemiology in the Division of Public Health manages the State reportable disease surveillance program. Information on the program can be found at: <http://www.epi.hss.state.ak.us/pubs/conditions/ConditionsReportable.pdf>

An enhanced surveillance program is described in the State of Alaska Division of Public Health Pandemic Influenza Response Plan. It can be found on the State pan Flu website at: <http://www.avianflu.alaska.gov/>

Enhanced Surveillance is described in Supplement E of the State plan. This supplement defines responsibilities for the Division of Public Health, Section of Epidemiology, Section of Laboratories, Section of Nursing and Hospitals and Clinics.

ENHANCED COMMUNICABLE DISEASE SURVEILLANCE IN THE ALASKA TRIBAL HEALTH SYSTEM. The Alaska Tribal Health System (ATHS) consists of seven hospitals and 200 clinics. It serves 130,000 Native beneficiaries as well as thousands of non-beneficiaries over much of Alaska. Therefore implementation of enhanced surveillance by the ATHS is critical for accurate monitoring of communicable disease outbreaks across Alaska. Fortunately the ATHS is very well suited to implementing a very effective, accurate enhanced surveillance system.

REGIONAL TRIBAL HEALTH CORPORATION ENHANCED COMMUNICABLE DISEASE SURVEILLANCE PROGRAM. An effective regional tribal health corporation enhanced surveillance program should consist of a number of elements.

Enhanced Surveillance Plan: Ideally each regional tribal health corporation will have a disaster or emergency plan that defines how the organization manages emergencies. There may be an annex or supplement on epidemics or even on a pandemic. If so that would be the place for the Enhanced Surveillance Plan. The plan would define elements of enhanced surveillance that are described below.

Who is in Charge: The plan should designate someone in the health corporation to be in charge of implementing and coordinating the surveillance plan. It could be the CHAP director, medical director or another individual. Responsibilities of this individual would include:

1. Serving as liaison with the Section of Epidemiology. This would involve receiving and disseminating information from Epidemiology. This information might include outbreak updates, case definition, information for the general public and other information involving enhanced surveillance procedures. It would also include reporting surveillance results back to State Epidemiology.
2. Setting up surveillance protocols in each community. This would involve selecting community health care workers who would manage the program in each community. It would also involve providing supplies such as sampling kits, forms, training and establishing procedures such as reporting results.
3. Monitoring the surveillance program to ensure it is functioning correctly in each community.

Community Enhanced Surveillance Program:

1. Who will be in charge? Ideally one person should be responsible for managing the surveillance system in each community. The clinic director would probably be the best individual for this role.
2. How will it be managed? A good way to conduct effective surveillance during a pandemic threat is to establish a screening walk-in clinic. It should be somewhere other than the community clinic. It should be scheduled for once or twice a day. Non-beneficiaries should not be charged for visiting the screening clinic. For other disease outbreaks the community clinic might be used.
3. Dissemination of information to the public: Community residents must be informed of the special clinic and hours. The public should also be informed of the signs and symptoms of the disease so they know when they should visit the screening clinic. And the public should be kept up to date on other aspects of the threat such as occurrence of cases in other regions, preventive precautions etc.
4. Reporting: Reports should be submitted every day even if no cases are seen. Information in areas not affected by the outbreak is as useful as information on

where it is occurring. In a pandemic the State will provide an Enhanced Surveillance Surveillance Form. A similar form could be used for other diseases.