


2010 Public Health Preparedness Summit

## Welcome!

- *Be courteous -please turn off cell phones or place on vibrate.*
- *If an alarm sounds, please locate your nearest emergency exit.*
- *Please sign-in at the headtable if you are seeking CE credit.*

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## School Closures in Response to A/H1N1: Issues for Decision-Makers

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## Spring 2009 School Closures

- Started with NYC high school on April 23
- Ultimately
  - 726 U.S. schools closed
  - Affecting 368,282 children




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## Systems Improvement

- Great variability in decisions signals a problem with PHEP system
  - Goals of closure
  - Whether to close
  - Triggers
  - When to reopen
  - Who decides



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## Clarify the Goal

- Goals may differ
  - Limit spread in the community
  - Protecting children from consequences
  - React to staff shortages or children kept home

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## Clarify the Goal

- Depending on goals
  - Alternatives to closure may be more effective



- Trigger for closure may be later




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## Clarify Authority and Decision Processes

- Laws and practices vary
  - from state to state
  - community to community
  - whether emergency has been declared
  - what type of emergency has been declared




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## Clarify Authority and Decision Processes

- Who's at the table
  - Perspectives and concerns
  - May depend on goals




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## Clarify Authority and Decision Processes

- How decision process is structured

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## Expect uncertainty

- Data on transmissibility, virulence, and effectiveness of preventive strategies

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## Expect Uncertainty

- Frequent changes in:
  - Case definition → triggers
    - Probable, suspected, confirmed cases
  - Official guidance → apparent official dissonance

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## Expect Uncertainty

- Need for
  - Flexibility
  - Monitoring impact of actions



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## Conclusion

- PHEP system improvement will require
  - Consideration of Goals
  - Clarification of Authority
  - Expectation of Uncertainty



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## QUESTIONS

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