

SUBJECT: Creation of a Tamiflu™ stockpile for the treatment and post-exposure prophylaxis of essential County employees in the event of pandemic influenza outbreak

BACKGROUND:

Although the exact timing of the occurrence of pandemic influenza is unknown, experts agree that it is inevitable. When a pandemic occurs, County government will be taxed to provide the critical services required to either respond to the pandemic or to sustain a livable community. At this time, Tamiflu™ is the recommended pharmaceutical of choice for both post-exposure prophylaxis and treatment of influenza, and may be an effective measure for mitigating the impact of a pandemic. However, other antivirals may be purchased along with Tamiflu, depending on resistance patterns of the virus and the prevailing medical opinion. Current Federal and State guidelines emphasize the self-sufficiency of local government and recommend against relying on the State to supply Tamiflu™. Creating a local stockpile of Tamiflu™ will provide a mechanism to ensure that essential County employees receive timely treatment or post-exposure prophylaxis, and will maximize the personnel resources available to provide critical services. The requested \$500,000 would allow for the purchase of approximately 7,500 courses of Tamiflu™ for treatment and/or post-exposure prophylaxis. This stockpile will be used to begin the treatment of staff until other State and/or Federal stockpile resources become available.

On May 12, 2006, Governor Schwarzenegger released his May Budget Revision Proposal. Included in this proposal is \$53.5 million to purchase approximately 3.7 million courses of antivirals. The storage, distribution and target recipients of these antivirals are still under discussion at the State level. However, the California Department of Health Services (CDHS) has outlined that their target groups for use will likely include: treatment of laboratory confirmed cases; prophylaxis of close contacts to a confirmed case; prophylaxis of health care workers that have been exposed to a confirmed case; and possibly as treatment for high risk groups (e.g., immuno-compromised) who have been exposed to a confirmed case.

The Community Health Agency is working closely with the Human Resources Department and others to identify potential cost recovery mechanisms. The Human Resources Department was recently able to negotiate with Blue Shield of California to add Riverside County Regional Medical Center's pharmacy to the approved network pharmacy list during an influenza pandemic. As a result, the County would be able to provide medication to employees that are insured by Blue Shield and recover the cost of the medication. This model will be explored with other carriers that provide medical insurance for Riverside County employees. Other issues such as the identification of essential County employees, methods of pharmaceutical storage and distribution, timing for treatment or post-exposure prophylaxis, and policies for dealing with employees

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who require time off work due to side effects from taking the medication are being discussed by an existing multi-agency, multi-disciplinary Pandemic Influenza Preparedness Committee.

FINANCIAL INFORMATION: The total amount requested is \$500,000 to create a Tamiflu™ stockpile for prophylaxis of essential County employees in the event of a pandemic influenza. This amount was not included in the FY 05/06 budget; therefore a budget adjustment of \$500,000 is requested.