



STATE OF NEW YORK DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

Corning Tower The Governor Nelson A. Rockefeller Empire State Plaza Albany, NY 12237

Antonia C. Novello, M.D., M.P.H., Dr.P.H.
Commissioner

Dennis P. Whalen
Executive Deputy Commissioner

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Dear Hospital CEO:

The New York State Department of Health (NYSDOH) continues to move forward with its emergency preparedness efforts. As you are probably aware, on December 2, 2004, the State Hospital Review and Planning Council adopted emergency regulations that require all hospitals,¹ diagnostic and treatment centers, nursing homes, home care services agencies and hospice providers to apply and obtain access to the New York State Health Provider Network (HPN). In addition, on January 10, 2005, the New York State Department of State adopted emergency regulations that require the same of adult care facilities.

The HPN is a secure, web-based system that is accessible via the Internet and is used by many types of healthcare providers to receive up-to-date information as well as to submit data to specialized programs for reporting or surveillance purposes. In times of emergency or regarding urgent matters, it is imperative that agencies and facilities exchange information and data with NYSDOH in a rapid, efficient manner. The HPN, a free service, is the best means to ensure a rapid, secure and efficient exchange of information. Accessing and distributing information utilizing telephone, fax and e-mail have yielded sporadic results. This problem was evident during last season's influenza crisis as NYSDOH attempted to determine the availability and the need for influenza vaccine throughout the State. The HPN will be the best means for NYSDOH to communicate with agencies to determine the best approach for handling such emergencies in the future. In the future, NYSDOH licensure and re-certification surveys will include ensuring that agencies have applied for HPN access, that providers have an active HPN coordinator, and that the information on the HPN is accurate and current.

An HPN rollout program is planned for the fall of 2005 which will include an introductory teleconference session designed to familiarize hospital executive staff with the resources the HPN provides for hospitals as well as subsequent hands-on training sessions for hospital and LHD staff to learn the use of these important HPN resources. The attachment

¹ And their services under Article 28: Laboratory, Emergency Departments, etc.

briefly describes some of the HPN functions that will be introduced to facility executives during these sessions and included in the hands-on training curriculum.

We hope that your facility will participate in this important program. The Department will be sending you a "Save the Dates" flyer shortly describing this important HPN Rollout and training events planned for this fall so that you may reserve the time on your calendar.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Lisa M. Wickens". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "L".

Lisa M. Wickens
Assistant Director
Office of Health Systems Management

Summary of some important HPN Resources

- The NYSDOH Communications Directory serves as the central database of accurate and up to date contact information for individuals playing key roles at NYSDOH, hospitals, Local Health Departments, and other important partners including home care agencies, hospices, nursing homes and first responder groups. In the event of an emergency it provides the crucial link for communication among these partners.
 - HPN users in critical roles at healthcare facilities and LHDs are now able to prioritize their contact information for receiving emergency alerts and advisories both during business hours and for after hours. This will expedite receipt of important messages by these individuals.
- The Health Alert Network (HAN) area of the HPN provides access to the latest NYS health alerts, advisories and other notifications that may affect your region or facility. These notifications include information from NYSDOH, NY City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, NYS Office of Homeland Security and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).
 - As part of the Fall HPN rollout, a more localized use of both the new Commerce Emergency Notification System and the Health Emergency Response Data System (HERDS) by LHDs and NYSDOH regional offices will become possible which should expedite response to local emergencies.
- A new electronic form for reporting nosocomial infections, which will simplify this reporting requirement for hospitals and enhance influenza surveillance efforts will also be introduced (more information will be sent shortly to hospital ICPs and HPN Coordinators regarding this new application).
- The HPN facilitates hospital compliance with the provisions of Governor Pataki's new law to combat prescription fraud by providing the tools to electronically order official prescription pads, and is the official site to which pharmacies must electronically submit original filings of all controlled substance prescriptions by 2006. A simplified, web-based process for acquiring and activating HPN accounts for facilities is now available and
- The HAN also maintains a large library of important preparedness and response information, training and guidance.