

 **STATE OF NEW YORK**
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

Corning Tower

The Governor Nelson A. Rockefeller Empire State Plaza

Albany, New York 12237

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

Dennis P. Whalen
Executive Deputy Commissioner

March 20, 2003

Dear Hospital CEO:

As part of our continuing effort to ensure our healthcare system's preparedness, the New York State Department of Health (NYSDOH) has designated eight Regional Resource Centers (RRCs). RRCs are geographically located throughout the state, outside New York City. The RRC's will receive funding through the Health Resources and Services Administration cooperative agreement grant with New York State to assist the county/local health departments and the county offices of emergency management in developing regional response plans to improve emergency preparedness and response.

The RRCs will have two significant objectives. First, the RRCs will assist both their local health department and contiguous county health departments develop a plan to accommodate a surge capacity of 500 acutely ill patients in a 24-48 hour period. This will require the RRCs to identify and work with other health care delivery organizations (hospitals, nursing homes, community healthcare centers, home healthcare agencies, etc.) to develop and support the plan. RRCs will not be responsible for implementing the surge capacity plan; that will be the responsibility of the local health departments and county emergency managers.

Second, the RRCs will assist the State and local health departments during the pre/post-event smallpox vaccination plan. Every hospital is responsible for developing a smallpox health care response team. These teams will be responsible for quickly triaging, isolating and managing the care of a suspect/confirmed smallpox patient. Health care workers will be provided additional protection through the provision of smallpox vaccination. Within specified counties outlined below, each RRC will provide consultation to physicians and health care providers that provide care to vaccinated persons experiencing a significant adverse reaction. The reporting mechanisms for an adverse reaction will be to the local health department, who will report to the NYSDOH. It is the responsibility of the treating physician to report the adverse reaction to the appropriate local health department.

RRCs will not be the sole smallpox responder or caregiver for the region. We require and expect that every hospital will have a plan to rapidly triage, isolate and manage the care of a smallpox patient or any other infectious disease. We expect that a suspect/confirmed smallpox patient will remain at the facility they originally presented to for care and treatment that safely meet the medical needs of the patient. Transfer would only be considered if the medical needs exceed the capability of that facility's level of care.

The RRCs will take a leadership role for healthcare delivery organizations in working with the county health departments and emergency management agencies to facilitate the development of enhanced emergency preparedness and response planning. Preparedness requires the full cooperation and collaboration of the entire health care delivery system to contribute to the protection and care of the residents of New York should an emergency event occur.

The following is a list of the healthcare organizations accepting the role of a Regional Resource Center; the counties assigned to the RRC for significant adverse event consultation by physicians or other health care providers treating a smallpox vaccinee; and the phone contact number for the health care provider to discuss care and treatment of a significant adverse event:

Erie County Medical Center: 1-800-729-5433

Erie, Niagara, Orleans, Genesee, Wyoming, Chautauqua, Cattaraugus and Allegany counties

Strong Memorial Hospital: 1-800-222-1222

Monroe, Wayne, Livingston, Ontario, Seneca, Yates, Steuben, Schuyler and Chemung counties

Upstate University Medical Center: 1-800-464-8668

Onondaga, Cayuga, Tompkins, Tioga, Broome, Chenango, Cortland, Madison, Oneida, Oswego, Herkimer, Lewis and Jefferson counties

Albany Medical Center: (518) 262-3111

Albany, Saratoga, Delaware, Otsego, Schoharie, Greene, Columbia, Rensselaer, Schenectady, Montgomery, Fulton, Washington and Warren counties

Champlain Valley Physicians Medical Center: (518) 562-7370

Clinton, Franklin, Essex, St. Lawrence and Hamilton counties

Westchester Medical Center: 1-800-677-9262

Westchester, Ulster, Sullivan, Dutchess, Orange, Putnam and Rockland counties

North Shore University Hospital: (516) 719-5000

Nassau county

Stony Brook University Hospital: (631) 444-1911

Suffolk county

NOTE:

These assigned counties are for the purpose of Adverse Event Consultation only. A map is enclosed designating the counties assigned to each RRC for the 24/7 smallpox vaccination adverse reaction consultation.

The geographic region for developing surge capacity will be determined by the Regional Resource Centers and may vary depending on available supporting resources to accommodate 500 acutely ill patients.

Should you have any questions or require further clarification, you may contact the Hospital Bioterrorism Preparedness Program at (518) 408-5163.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Antonia C. Novello M.D. M.P.H. Dr. P.H.".

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

cc: Regional Health Directors
State Hospital Associations