



DAVID MAXWELL-JOLLY
Director

State of California—Health and Human Services Agency
Department of Health Care Services



ARNOLD SCHWARZENEGGER
Governor

February 18, 2009

Dear Indian Health Clinic Executive Director/Emergency Preparedness Coordinator:

The California Department of Public Health (CDPH) along with the Department of Health Care Services (DHCS) is launching a program to enroll all Indian Health Clinics in the California Health Alert Network (CAHAN). As the State of California's official emergency alert system, CAHAN coordinates emergency planning, response communication, collaboration, and alerting, between federal, state, and local governmental agencies, health care providers, and regional emergency partners.

A key to rapid and successful response to an outbreak or health emergency is early notification of an event. Tribes and tribal organizations may see early cases of infectious agents. Given their proximity to rural areas, Indian Health Clinics may be at increased risk of experiencing a surge of patients due to an outbreak of an infectious agent that travels from animals to humans (e.g. Avian Influenza, West Nile Virus, etc.). Early notification will allow for rapid containment of the spread of an outbreak.

Coordination between Indian Health Clinics and local health departments is especially vital in rapid outbreak identification and response. CAHAN allows health providers to receive health alerts that are of concern to clinic staff in California. Since Indian Health Clinics often serve more than one county, it is important to participate in a multi-county and statewide alert system like CAHAN. Although some of the Indian Health Clinics have already been enrolled in CAHAN, all clinics would benefit from access to this system.

Enrollment and participation in the CAHAN system allows for immediate access to health alerts 24 hours a day, seven days a week, 52 weeks a year. Participation is free of charge and vital to emergency preparedness and response, especially in the event of a pandemic. Several communication methods may be registered to receive alerts through CAHAN including alpha numeric pager, email, cellular/mobile, landline phones, and fax. CAHAN also serves as a collaborative work environment to securely share and store confidential and sensitive information between health and medical emergency partners. There are over 16,000 participants currently enrolled in CAHAN and you can view the CAHAN website at <https://cahan.ca.gov>.

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This January 2009 through October 2009, CDPH's Emergency Preparedness Office will provide a series of 1 ½ hour CAHAN training workshops statewide on a regional basis. The workshops will provide training in receiving and confirming CAHAN alerts and ways they will optimize statewide communications using the system. A training schedule of dates is attached. To register for a workshop please visit www.cahanworkshops.com.

If you have any questions or would like more information about this effort please contact the CAHAN Team at cahaninfo@cdph.ca.gov or 1-877-376-4767.

Sincerely,



Sandra "Sam" Willburn, Chief
Primary and Rural Health Division
CA Dept of Health Care Services



David Sprenger, MD
Chief Medical Officer
CA Area Indian Health Service

Enc (1) Jan. 2009-Oct. 2009 CAHAN Training Schedule