Managing Public Health Emergencies: The Barbados Experience

Presented by
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Presentation Outline

- Background: The National Emergency Management System (NEMS)
- Case Study: A H1N1 Pandemic Response 2009
  - Preparedness, Alert & Mobilisation, Response- Agency, Sector, National, Regional
  - Policy Issues
  - Lessons Learnt / Applied
National Emergency Management System

- EMAC Standing Committees
- National Emergency Services
- District Emergency Organisations (DEOs)
- Regional & International Partners
- Private Sector
- Emergency Management Advisory Council (EMAC)
- Department of Emergency Management (DEM)
Guiding Principle

• Integrated and coordinated disaster management based on partnerships and cooperation between public, private sector, NGO and regional and international entities
Case Study A H1N1 Pandemic Response Timeline

- April 2009
- May 2009
- June 2009
- July 2009
- August 2009
April 2009

- Monitoring of global situation. Updates from national, regional and international agencies

- 27th April: Convening of meeting to update stakeholders and discuss national response to threat. Followed by a press conference.
  
  – Key agencies involved: Ministries of Health, Agriculture, Tourism, Education, International Transport, Foreign Affairs, DEM, Ports of Entry, Immigration and Customs Department, QEH, Police, PAHO, BHTA
– Monitoring of the situation by national authorities

– Ministries of Agriculture & Health Response
  • Measures for Port health surveillance, laboratory, site, quarantine and isolation measures, travel advisory, general hygiene, polyclinic response, prophylaxis and treatment

– Wider Emergency Management Response

– Information sharing and gathering for agencies.
– No reported cases in Barbados & Caribbean Region.
– However precautionary measures advised and taken throughout various agencies of government, wider public.
– Ensure agency SOPs are updated
• 1st National Emergency Management Coordination Meeting
  – To give an situational overview
  – Discuss its implications for Barbados
  – Decide on appropriate actions to be taken
  – Discuss areas of concern
  – Recommended reporting mechanism
  – Way Forward
• Decisions reached at 1st National Emergency Management Coordination Meeting
  – Institute passive surveillance at Ports of Entry
  – Travel Advisory: avoid non-essential travel.
  – Agencies review and update their SOPs
  – National planning and coordination cell established utilising NEMS
• Screening & monitoring mechanisms in place similar to CWC 2007 eg advanced passenger lists.
• PPE for frontline personnel
• Public Awareness incl. training & sensitisation of staff, train-the –trainer, public service announcements
• Cabinet Level Briefing
  – To give an situational overview
  – Discussion on national level implementation plan eg appropriate actions taken by health, ports of entry and other agencies implemented its implications for Barbados
  – Protective measures for key frontline and response personnel: general hygiene, PPE, treatment availability
April 29th, 2009

- Treatment availability, distribution and logistics
- Discussion on key national level considerations
  - Public Health Emergency vs National State of Emergency
  - Contingency plan for workforce mobilisation
  - Incident management
  - Destination /Reputation Management
  - Restriction of Mass Gatherings
  - Availability of finances to implement key actions
• Briefing Social Partnership
  – Key representatives of government, labour unions, private sector
  – Situational awareness
  – Dissemination of information, reaching their sphere of influence
  – Strategic policy issues and implications

May 2009
National Actions as at May 5th, 2009

- Activation of National Plan and procedures
- Increased surveillance at ports of entry
- Procurement of additional doses of medication
- Health Promotion Public Awareness Campaign targeting frontline personnel, response agencies, Cabinet, general public
- Activation of NEOC & HEOC
- Samples sent to CAREC
- CDEMA Sub-Regional / Regional Updates
May 2009

- 7th - 2nd National Emergency Management Coordination Meeting
- PAHO/CAREC Illumination Session
- 11th & 20th - Health Sector Coordination Meetings
- At 20th WHO reported 10,242 cases in 41 countries with 81 deaths
- No confirmed cases from specimen tested by CAREC
- Suspected case from New York: necessary procedures and home quarantine implemented.
- Strategic policy issues and implications
- Increase in public awareness activity
June 2009

- 4th June - 3rd National Emergency Management Coordination Meeting

- 12th – Press Conference
  - Global Status update 28,774 people in 74 countries, 144 deaths
  - National 3 confirmed cases in Barbados - however mild
  - Increased precautionary measures
  - Increase the public awareness campaign

- CDEMA Sub-Regional /Regional Updates
Continued public awareness campaign, surveillance etc.

July 3rd - Pandemic Influenza Guidelines for use in various settings developed by Ministry of Health and disseminated.
  - Home Isolation Guidelines For People with Influenza
  - Care of Children with Influenza : Guidelines for Day Care Setting and Home
  - Guidelines for Mass Gatherings during Influenza Pandemic
  - Instructions for Summer Camps

CDEMA Sub-Regional /Regional Updates
• Continued public awareness campaign, surveillance etc.
• August 4th – PAHO/CAREC Elluminate Sessions
  – As of July 31st 151,164 confirmed cases of A H1 N1 with 1119 deaths in 159 countries
• CDEMA Sub-Regional /Regional Updates
Lessons Learnt

• National **Coordination** mechanism proved to be an invaluable framework

• **Communication** is key. Keeping all stakeholders at all levels informed.

• Importance of heightened awareness of population and media

• Partnership and **collaboration** is critical in any national level response.

• Reinforced the usefulness of preparedness planning
Lessons Learnt

- Opportunity to validate existing plans and SOPs
- Provision of a catalyst to further develop plans and SOPs
- Reporting and recording mechanism important
- Opportunity to discuss response challenges
- Information Management was critical: accuracy, timeliness, communication to target audience
- Importance of Exercises: FAHUM March 2009