

COUNTY OF RIVERSIDE  
COMMUNITY HEALTH AGENCY  
DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH

# NEWS RELEASE

Contact: Sarah Mack  
Deputy Director, Department of Public Health – PIO  
951-358-6181

November 14, 2006

## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

### **COUNTY STAGES MOCK FLU OUTBREAK TO TEST RESPONSE PLAN**

#### **County-wide emergency response strategies to be challenged by public health emergency**

**Riverside County, CA** – County health officials will battle test their response plan for a large-scale public health emergency this week when they simulate the outbreak of a deadly flu strain.

The Emergency Disaster Response Exercise, the latest in a number of disaster response exercises over the past two years, will be staged November 15-16 and involves several County agencies, more than 18 city agencies and 15 hospitals and clinics.

Under the exercise scenario, a fictitious terrorist group manufactures and spreads a deadly influenza, taxing local hospitals and clinics. It is designed to gauge the effectiveness of the County's actual plan for responding to such a pandemic.

"A human influenza pandemic could adversely affect the health of hundreds of thousands of people and experts tell us that it is a real possibility in America," said Riverside County Health Officer Dr. Gary Feldman. "This functional exercise presents the perfect opportunity to test pandemic plans and coordination efforts with our many county-wide partners. The science of a pandemic changes everyday, but what doesn't change is Public Health preparedness efforts to strengthen our plan and enhance the County's response capabilities

The exercise will include testing of hospital surge capacity, assessing the prompt distribution of medical supplies to treat hundreds of exposed people, testing hospital surge capacity, and evaluating laboratory capabilities.

"By exercising, we can build on successes and identify unanticipated needs in order to protect the health and safety of County residents." said Mary Moreland, Deputy Director Fire Services, Office of Emergency Services.

For more information on the Riverside County County-wide Full-scale Functional Exercise, please contact the Bioterrorism Preparedness and Response Branch at 951 358-7100 or visit the website at [www.rivcobt.org](http://www.rivcobt.org)