

What are some communicable diseases or threats currently affecting public and community health in your area? What are some procedures used in public health to eliminate the threat to society?

If I read our local health department website correctly it looks like to me that there are 5 cases of TB in Brevard County. When I thought I would find hepatitis or AIDS/HIV or something like a staff infection. I find TB. There is a table of contents on the website that takes you to TB information and it gives you the clinic times for testing, counseling and symptoms. Staff is available for home visits, I do not see anything about self reporting, it gives the policy to report for healthcare personnel. I was surprised by the fact that TB was even listed and I was unaware there were outbreaks of TB this day in age, I get tested yearly for TB with my employer and get medical treatment if necessary if tested positive. I thought there were treatments for TB so it would be preventable.

http://www.doh.state.fl.us/chdBrevard/epi/Reportable_Diseases_12_2008.pdf

Response 2

Communicable diseases are the leading cause of death, targeting the very young and the elderly population. Coccidioidomycosis or Valley Fever is a fungus that affects the Southwestern United States, parts of Mexico, Central and South America. The fungus grows in soil and can survive harsh elements like cold, heat and drought. People get the “Valley Fever” after breathing in the air infected with the fungus. The California Department of Health (CDPH) suggest using respiratory protection like masks or limiting outdoor activity in areas where the fungus spores are present like the San Joaquin Valley or Central Valley. Vaccinations are not available at this time but efforts are ongoing. Individuals that work in the affected areas should avoid dusty air when possible.

Generally speaking the public health tools used to eliminate the threat to society are

- Barrier protection – Isolation and quarantine procedures
 - o Examples: Hand washing and nets to protect from malaria, or condoms to protect from sexually transmitted disease.
- Immunizations
 - o Example: Strengthening the immune system through using antibodies.
- Screening
 - o Example: Screening for TB.
- Contact treatment
 - o Example: Treating HIV has helped to reduce transmission.
- Maximize effectiveness of treatment and prevent resistance
 - o Example: Direct observer therapy (DOT), ensuring adherence to prescribed therapy or treatment.

References:

California Department of Public Health. (2010). *Coccidioidomycosis (Valley Fever)*. Retrieved from <http://www.cdph.ca.gov/HealthInfo/discond/Pages/Coccidioidomycosis.aspx>

University of Phoenix. (2010). Public Health 101 Chapter 7 communicable Diseases. Retrieved from University of Phoenix, HCS 457 website