

Fishing for Sharks in a Rowboat

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Conclusions 1: The System

- Electronic (when it works)
- Automated (when it works)
- Daily (when it works)
- ED based chief complaint surveillance

Conclusions 2: The Payoff

- Relationships with hospitals
- Multi-use data
- “Pulse” of your jurisdiction
- Awareness

Conclusions 3: The Price

- Needs to be validated
- Need a dedicated epidemiologist
- Need IT capabilities
- Need buy in

Bergen County

- 884,000 people census 2000
- 234 square miles
- Across the river from NYC
- Large commuter population
- 6 hospitals

New Guy on the Block

- Hired November 2000
- No history of epidemiology on the county level.
- “Go do some epidemiology...and since this is bioterrorism money, do something about that too.”
- Surveillance??

Health Officers and Other Bosses

- Be nice to your epidemiologist.
- Let them do epidemiology. A little?
Please?

First Blood

- Meet with ICP
- “Bioterrorism pitch”

Seconds

- Meet with ICP, ED director, Lab Director, MIS/IT
- Present idea and listen to possibilities
- Assess IT capabilities

- Go back and write up proposal and validation.

Persuasion in the Days Before the Sopranos

- We'll take care of that surveillance request for you.
- We'll provide the data back to you.
- It's easy – just ask the IT guy.
- HIPPA who?
- JCAHO compliant
- Let's have a press conference.

All Bets Are Off

- Anthrax 2001
- Hospital CEO – “what can we do?”
- 2 week daily site visits
- Re-evaluate surveillance proposal and initiate new plan before validation.
- No formal agreements
- Regular FTP transfer

SAS

- Do not need to be an expert
- A little bit of this and a little bit of that
- SAS help line – I talk to them more than I talk to my parents.
- FTP, email, moving averages, text scan

Errors

- The data is coming in every day
- The system is running – away.
- Scheduler software is late to more appointments than I am

Concluding Conclusions

- Never enough time
- Creative, energetic and dedicated
- Don't give up your data.
- Need to assess applicability on a jurisdiction to jurisdiction basis.
- Hospitals call me when there is a situation.

Thank You

- Len Fiorenza
- Bergen County Department of Health Services
- Bergen County Hospitals
- NYC Department of Health