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Healthcare providers and community health partners invited to H1N1 Symposium

The 2009 West Virginia Public Health Symposium: Implications of H1N1 and Other Communicable Diseases: Are We Prepared?, is scheduled for November 19 and 20 at the Charleston Marriott – Town Center 200 Lee Street, in Charleston, West Virginia. Over 100 individuals have already registered for the event that begins Thursday.

State Health Officer Dr. Cathy Slemp who is leading the fight against H1N1 in the state will begin the conference with a 90 minute update on H1N1 in West Virginia. Dr. Slemp will then join a “Late Breaker” panel discussion including State Epidemiologist Dr. Loretta Haddy; Dr. Dee Bixler, director of the Division of Infectious Disease Epidemiology, WVBPH; Jeffrey J. Neccuzi, director of the Division of Immunization Services, WVBPH; Dr. Rahul Gupta, health officer at Kanawha-Charleston health department; and Diana Riddle, nursing director and Mason County health department. The panel discussion will enable attendees to ask questions of those on the front lines in a moderated forum.

Dr. Haddy said, “This is a tremendous opportunity for healthcare providers or community groups to send at least one representative to this conference to learn the facts about H1N1. We’re extending an invitation to community partners, school and higher education partners, nonprofits and anyone that needs or wants the latest information on H1N1 to attend.”

The keynote speaker for the event will be Dr. Nathan Wolfe, an epidemiologist who will speak about global pandemics and will discuss H1N1. Wolfe is the Lorry I. Lokey Visiting Professor in Human Biology at Stanford University and director and founder of the Global Viral Forecasting Initiative, a pandemic early warning system which monitors the spillover of novel infectious agents from animals into humans. His work has been featured on National Geographic and CNN's Planet in Peril.

Author and motivational speaker Jewell Diamond Taylor will close the conference on how to deal with the stress and increased workload of H1N1 called “Shift Happens.” Taylor has helped motivate and encourage staff at the CIA, Pentagon, LA Police Department and numerous other organizations. Also presenting during the event will be Dr. Michael Iseman, Professor of Medicine at National Jewish Medical and Research Center in Denver, Colorado, a renowned tuberculosis expert. Other topics covered will be gastroenteritis, chickenpox surveillance, and adult hepatitis. Registration information is available at www.wvsdc.org or by calling (304) 388-9960. Continuing education credits for those needing them are available.