

# THE VOICE

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## JTF CAPMED Publishes Article on H1N1 and Children

**T**he World Health Organization estimates that the world is confronted with a new influenza pandemic approximately three times every 100 years. The emergence of novel Influenza A (H1N1), formerly known as swine flu, may be the next serious pandemic. More importantly, the emergence of a new influenza pandemic has raised the question once again: “Are we prepared?” The uniqueness, epidemiology, and widespread impact of H1N1 continues to be uncovered with the passage of time and discovery of new cases world-wide. It is not known how severe the H1N1 virus will be in the coming months. However, with the ongoing identification of new cases, and the enduring hospitalizations and deaths due to the virus, it appears that the flu season will pose critical challenges – especially to vulnerable

populations. Novel Influenza A poses a unique threat because most individuals have no immunity against this virus strain. This places a very large portion of the population at risk for becoming infected. Children, in particular, are highly susceptible to the H1N1 virus. With time, more is being uncovered about the effects the virus has on the pediatric population. Information on children at greatest risk is based on recent mortality data as well as trends seen in the past from seasonal influenza. For example, children under the age of 5 years are at greatest risk for becoming ill. Furthermore, children who have immune system deficiencies or require medical care that results in immune deficiencies (e.g., cancer treatments); chronic medical conditions such as congenital heart disease, diabetes, severe persistent asthma;



Image provided by: Getty Images/George Frey 2009

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A boy wears a mask while waiting for an H1N1 vaccination at a hospital in Taipei, Taiwan (REUTERS/Nicky Loh)

technology dependent children (e.g., ventilator, oxygen, or tracheotomy requirements); neurological disorders (e.g., cerebral palsy, epilepsy, or neurodevelopmental disabilities); and sickle cell anemia, to name a few, are at higher risk. Pediatric healthcare specialists caution that observations to date are based on availability of limited mortality data and surveillance from past seasons of seasonal influenza. Changes in high-risk groups may vary as



Girl and her doll wear a mask for swine flu

continuing efforts unfold to collect and analyze data during the current influenza pandemic. Pediatric experts are also increasingly becoming aware that the potential exists for healthcare facilities to

be inundated with children should H1N1 return as a stronger variant leading to a pandemic world-wide.

Little is known about the psychosocial implications an influenza pandemic may have for children. In fact, there is a dearth of published research on the psychosocial risks prior to, during, and after a pandemic. What literature is available describes what psychosocial impact might be anticipated in the event of an influenza pandemic. As seen in many public health crises, psychosocial response from an emergency preparedness perspective is usually an afterthought.



A child peers in the window as she waits in line to receive the H1N1 vaccine in Haltom City, Texas (REUTERS/Jessica Rinaldi)

Colonel (Dr.) John Murray, J7 – Director of Education, Training & Research, recently authored the first-ever article on the psychosocial risks to children prior to, during, and after a pandemic. “A Collaborative Approach to Meeting the Psychosocial Needs of Children during an Influenza Pandemic” will be published in the *Journal for Specialists in Pediatric Nursing (JSPN)*. JSPN is the international evidence-based practice journal for nurses who specialize in the care of children and families. ■



## JTF Senior Enlisted Veteran's Day Program

This year's Veteran's Day was recognized and celebrated throughout the JOA. As the SEL for the JTF, I have developed a Team-building Day for the Senior Enlisted Leaders assigned to the HQ. This has really brought the group together and boosted morale as we learn about our fellow teammates and get a little training as well.

The John F. Kennedy High School Student Government Association invited me to speak during their Veteran's Day Program assembly on 10 Nov 09. This was Kennedy's time to honor our nation's Veterans and show respect to those who have served and continue to serve our country today. This was a great opportunity for me to bring the entire enlisted staff to the program to further develop them as professionals as well as work on their speaking abilities with the public.



JTF Staff and JFK Navy JROTC Students

The program began with the school's JROTC Color guard posting the colors and introductions made by the student body leadership. To bring a special

touch to the program, I asked that we be allowed to have representatives from the Army, Air Force, and Navy speak to the assembly. Each service brought a special touch to the program by sharing their experiences and highlights of their careers in the Armed Forces. We also heard from a former soldier, Mr. Greg Bowman who is a

retired Educator and sits on the Board of Directors for the Kennedy Education Foundation. He served as an Infantryman Sergeant in the Army and brought a wonderful touch and positive perspective to the program. After the program, we talked with students and answered all the questions they had. It proved to be a successful teambuilding event! ■



JFK Navy JROTC Students



## Holiday Message from the Commander

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In this season of reflection and celebrations, my family and I extend our warmest and most heartfelt wishes for a safe and joyous holiday to all of the personnel and families committed to taking care of the wounded, ill and injured that come here to the National Capital Region. Thanks to each of you for your service and commitment in all that you do for our nation's heroes every day. Have a great holiday season.

Sincerely,

VADM Mateczun






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# THE VOICE

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