



Waunakee Rotary Club

Nov. 1, 2007
Vol. 41 No. 16

Behind the scenes, state health officials are scheming ways to protect and prevent Wisconsin citizens from communicable diseases.

And Joe Cordova of the Wisconsin Division of Public Health is among them, he told the Waunakee Rotary Club at the Oct. 25 meeting.

The Wisconsin Division of Public Health helps with many promotional campaigns, such as the "Click It or Ticket" seatbelt ads. The agency tries to prevent not only diseases, but trauma, as well.

Part of the prevention efforts involve providing vaccines for children without health care. That's been the case for mumps. In 1964, there were over 6,000 cases for mumps in the state, but in 1978, that number dropped to 337 cases. In 2004, there were none.

But the prevention efforts have been less effective in the last two years, Joe said, with 17 cases so far. The same scenario occurred with pertussis, or whooping cough.

Vaccinations were administered to children ages 2-3, but they last only 10 years or so and then wear off. Because some people recently have felt the vaccines might be harmful, they have opted out of them, allowing outbreaks of pertussis to occur. So now there is a vaccine for middle-school aged children.

Joe noted that Rotary's campaign to eradicate polio has been fantastic. Rotary is the third largest contributor to that campaign around the world, and its efforts have helped limit the disease to just four countries.

"It used to be everywhere," Joe said. "We in public health are aware of the contribution you make."

One concern to the Wisconsin Division of Public Health has been avian or bird flu, Joe said, adding that it has a 50 percent fatality rate. Currently, people have contracted

this flu from birds alone, but if the virus mutates and can be spread from person to person, a pandemic could easily occur.

The health department also works on community mitigation programs. In 1918, more people died in a huge flu pandemic than were killed in World War I.

When health officials examined various communities' practices at the time, they found the ones that shut down schools fared much better than others.

So Joe and other health workers have considered the possibility of shutting schools down in the event of a pandemic. Yet although prevention would benefit public health, the consequence of parents staying home and the loss of workers would have an economic impact. Sporting events and other large gatherings would also have to be canceled, Joe said.

"It gets to be complicated real fast," he added.

Joe noted that business owners can create a business plan to address such a scenario. Assuming that the flu has a 30 to 40 percent attack rate, they can devise a means to accommodate such a pandemic. That could involve establishing ways for employees to work from home and preventing the spread of germs in the work place.

To prevent the spread of germs, health experts are urging people to cough into their sleeves rather than their hands when no facial tissues are available.

Joe said it's important to get a flu shot. And no, the flu shot does not cause the flu, he said.

Other items:

- Thank you notes were received from the sponsors of Kids Against Hunger and Project Blankets for the club's donations.

OFFICERS

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Calendar of Events:

Thanksgiving breakfast, Nov. 22.

Rotary in Lights, Nov. 26-Jan. 1

• Raissa Souza, Rotary's exchange student, is selling wreaths as a booster for the Waunakee gymnastics team.

Guests: Joann and Ted Leonard, guest of Jim Leonard; exchange student Raissa Souza.

Visiting Rotarian: Tom Wolf, Stoughton.

Birthdays: Nov. 4, Jeremiah Gollon.

Anniversaries: Nov. 1, Neil and Lily King; Nov. 6, Jim and Margaret Meyer; Nov. 6, Dick and Sally Pilsner.

Prayers: Nov. 1, Leonard Allen; Nov. 8, Kim Wilde; Nov. 15, Pat Durden; Nov. 22, Msgr. Kramer; Nov. 29, Susan Vergeront.

Programs: Nov. 1, Club Assembly.

Greeters: Nov. 1, Gary Epping, William Erickson; Nov. 8, Kevin Even, Mike Fehrenbach; Nov. 15, Betsy Flanagan, Greg Garton; Nov. 22, Amy Gile Enge, Jeremiah Gollon.

Make up meetings online

It's easy to make up a meeting on the Internet. The site is www.rotaryclubone.org. Print out the form and give it to Phil Willems, the club secretary.