

American Academy of Family Practice (AAFP)

Background

Membership:

94,300 physicians (family physicians who must complete 150 hours of continuing medical education every three years and recertify every six years), and medical students

Responsibilities in bioterrorism/WMD events:

AAFP members are expected to act as “sentinel” physicians who can detect and provide an early response to bioterrorism-associated illnesses. They also are expected to fulfill the broader responsibilities of conveying credible information to their patients and communities.

Past bioterrorism/WMD information dissemination activities to members:

AAFP has provided information to members through two websites (one for professionals-- www.aafp.org and one for the public— www.familydoctor.org that includes information developed at AAFP as well as links to resources), plenary speakers on bioterrorism at the 2001, 2002, and 2003 annual meetings, and CME course offerings. AAFP also provides a fax back system for members without Internet access.

Current modes of communication with members:

1. Print materials
 - a. Biweekly clinical journal (*American Family Physician*)
 - b. Monthly practice management journal (*Family Practice Management*)
 - c. Monthly all-member news and features (*FP Report*)
 - d. Quarterly research journal (*Annals of Family Medicine*; published with sister organizations)
 - e. Newsletter sent twice monthly to 3,341 key AAFP leaders (*AAFP Direct*)
2. Electronic
 - a. Website (www.aafp.org)
 - b. Weekly newsletter (*AAFP This Week*)
 - c. Electronic version of twice monthly to key AAFP leaders (*AAFP Direct*)

Project

Target audience(s):

All members

Target need(s):

1. Follow-up 2001 survey in which 24% of respondents felt prepared to recognize signs and symptoms of bioterrorism-related diseases and 38% rated their knowledge of diagnosis and management of these diseases as poor.
2. Lack of protocol/procedures for rapid web postings on the website.
3. Lack of a structured system to communicate rapidly with members and a specific protocol for decisions about what is included in the system.
4. Lack of a process for ongoing reminders about the availability of a rapid communication system.

Project goals:

1. Develop a strategic plan that describes the intended responses of the AAFP to these issues.
2. Formalize an internal system for identifying and providing bioterrorism and other time-sensitive information
3. Develop a reminder system for members (and others) and encourage routine access of that system
4. Institutionalize the process so that it can continue without funding upon completion of the project and obtain formal approval of the strategic plan and implementation process from the Board of Directors.

Information to be disseminated:

1. Availability and use of rapid communication system
2. Messages with general implications for AAFP member (e.g., information regarding emerging infectious diseases; information from the CDC Health Alert Network or Clinician Outreach and Communication Activities; any FDA alert; any major actions which could immediately affect their practice; any item deemed to be of general interest but with some urgency)

Dissemination strategy:

- A. Reorganization of information and procedures for maintenance
 1. Online survey to identify current needs.
 2. Website review
 3. Website redesign
- B. Development and maintenance of communication channels
 1. Organize communication channels
 - a. Effectively use multiple channels to announce & encourage use of rapid communication system
 - Send President's Letter to 58,500 active members to describe the procedure for accessing emergency or time sensitive information.
 - Place a monthly reminder in *AAFP Report*
 - Use e-newsletter to inform 58,863 members about new emergency or time-sensitive information on the website
 - Use *AAFP Direct* (print and electronic) to support and reinforce regular use of the system
 - Use regular mailings to 55 constituent chapters to inform and encourage their transmission of information about the communication process through their journal and meetings
 - Use Daily News Tips on the website home page to point to new and important information as well as the communication process itself
 - One page fact sheet
 - PDA "business card" describing access
 2. Consider PDA use

Evaluation strategy:

1. Online survey
2. Website review
3. Post-redesign website review
4. Frequency of
5. Website hits
6. Use of fax-back system
7. Add query regarding knowledge of rapid communication system to annual survey x 3 years