

# **Bringing Isolation And Quarantine Into The Modern Era Through Comprehensive Technical Assistance And Training**

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**Massachusetts Department of Public Health (MDPH)  
Focus Area G Initiative**

**CDC Public Health Preparedness Conference  
February 2005**

# Background/Problem Identification

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- Many of MA laws regarding I/Q date from the late 1800's
- MA regulations for reportable diseases and isolation and quarantine were updated in 2003
  - Included: addition of certain diseases with bioterrorist potential and emergency reporting of emerging infections
- Process highlighted difficulties of interpreting and implementing laws from a different era

# Background/Problem Identification

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- **Example: No due process or right to challenge**
- **Example: No practical enforcement capacity**
- **Example: Reimbursement of no more than \$2/day for isolated patients for missing work**
- **Example: Local public health can't enforce across city/town lines**
- **Advent of anthrax (2001) and SARS (2003) forced MDPH to address I/Q in a modern context regarding civil liberties and logistics**

# Technical Assistance and Training

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- Isolation and quarantine education and training was prioritized in Focus Area G
- A sub-workgroup was formed in late 2002 to focus on this topic
- Included were representatives from local health departments, healthcare provider community, academic center, and epidemiologists and lawyers from MDPH

# Technical Assistance and Training cont.

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## TRAINING AND TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE PLAN:

- 1) Satellite broadcast on isolation and quarantine
- 2) Legal forms to isolate a SARS patient (as an example)
- 3) Classroom training to supplement satellite broadcast
- 4) Consolidated webpage as a single source reference

# Technical Assistance and Training cont.

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## SATELLITE BROADCAST:

- Aired in March of 2004
- 1-day broadcast, downlinked at 19 sites across MA
- Attended by approximately 800 people representing all audiences (local public health was primary)
- Format: expert panel discussion, Q&As from audience, video clip roll-ins and a facilitated exercise at each downlink site on chickenpox
- See handout #1 for list of objectives

# Technical Assistance and Training cont.

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## **SATELLITE BROADCAST:**

- **Trained facilitators at each downlink site**
- **Evaluation results were very positive**
- **Increase in knowledge for objectives averaged 80%**
- **Broadcast did a lot to raise awareness regarding I/Q in a current day context**
- **Broadcast made available on CD, VHS and website**
- **Newly developed legal forms were introduced**

# Technical Assistance and Training cont.

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## LEGAL FORMS:

- Developed in collaboration w/ Attorney General's Office
- 22 new legal forms - to guide a local health department or local lawyer through the Superior Court administrative process of isolating a patient for SARS if voluntary compliance can not be achieved
- Forms are adaptable for other infectious diseases
- See handout #1 for a list of the legal forms

# Technical Assistance and Training cont.

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## LEGAL FORMS:

- **Three Step Process To Implement I/Q**
  - Education, persuasion for voluntary compliance
  - Written order from local health department (has force of law)
  - Application for court order by local health department and MDPH
- **The 22 forms support this three step process**

# Technical Assistance and Training cont.

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## CLASSROOM TRAINING:

- A ½ day program was developed to train participants on how to complete and process the legal forms
- Target audience: local health departments and local lawyers
- Instructors are 2 lawyers: from MDPH and Attorney General's Office
- Program has been given 11 times to date and is continuing

# Technical Assistance and Training cont.

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## CONSOLIDATED WEBPAGE:

- A new web page on the MDPH website to access all reportable disease, and isolation and quarantine information, in one place
- URL:  
[www.mass.gov/dph/cdc/epii/reportable/reportable/htm](http://www.mass.gov/dph/cdc/epii/reportable/reportable/htm)
- Web hits have been tracked
- New page is one of the more frequent pages visited

# Lessons Learned

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- **Certain level of expertise is needed to enforce I/Q**
- **Efforts in MA have strengthened local capacity, specifically with routine I/Q situations**
- **Underestimated the fear and anxiety associated with this topic among many audiences (e.g., police, EMS, general public)**
- **Challenge with bringing judges and lawyers on board**
- **Need to continue to prioritize this topic, specifically in regards to the logistics of food, medicine, pets, mental health during I/Q of larger groups of people**

# Continuing and Future Efforts

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- Continuation of classroom training
- Development of legal forms for quarantine
- Targeted training to judges, magistrates and lawyers
- Working with court system to ensure that indigent patients have court appointed lawyers
- Development of documents as new info becomes available
  - Example: “Police Powers During Public Health Emergencies”
  - Example: “EMS Responsibilities With Infectious Diseases”

# Contact Information

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- **Regarding the development of the legal forms and the Superior Court process contact:**
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