

Everybody Panic!
Pandemic and Municipal Reaction to Communicable Disease

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Grade/Unit/Topic: 11th Grade American History Class. Progressive Reforms: Municipal Action.

Abstract:

This four day lesson examines the implications of local municipal government reacting to the Spanish Influenza outbreak in 1918, and how the actions of health officials during this outbreak were very much the same ways health officials would react to a similar pandemic in today's world.

Essential Questions:

1. What is a pandemic? How is a pandemic different than an outbreak of disease?
2. How does a pandemic affect social and economic elements of our society?
3. What precautions can people take to avoid becoming ill?
4. What roles do local, state and federal governments play in a pandemic?

Assessments:

1. List of events that contributed to the epidemic
2. List of actions taken by the health officials combating the epidemic.
3. Document analysis worksheet
4. PowerPoint presentations covering two factors: (1) Economic impact of pandemic on the United States Economy; (2) Preventive measures to avoid or lessen damage of an epidemic.
5. Essay explaining a pro/anti position regarding mandatory vaccination for the populace.

Setting the purpose:

We have examined the importance of sanitation by examining Jane Adams and Hull House in Chicago, and how the Pure Food and Drug Act of 1906 allowed the government to intrude into private businesses to guard the population from unsafe food and drugs. For this lesson, students will spend one day watching "American Experience: Influenza 1918" to provide the background for assessments.

On the 2nd day, students will be broken into 4 groups and asked to create two lists: One list detailing the government responses to the epidemic and one list detailing events and actions that contributed to the epidemic. Groups will present their information to the class and all factual points will be collected and written on the board.

Analysis of local primary documents:

After discussion of the video is completed, students will be given copies of the city of Urbana's Health Ordinances from 1916 and a newspaper article from the Urbana Courier titled "Illinois Flu Policy Outlined." The class will examine the ordinances and Courier article and we will summarize the reaction of both state and local government reactions to the Spanish Flu on the board. Students will be broken into pairs and three newspaper articles will be assigned to all pairs. Students will complete document analysis worksheets for each of the three articles with an additional essay written by the students about how the government reacted in each of the three articles that follows what was outlined in the Urbana ordinance and the Courier article "Illinois Flu Policy Outlined."

Ties to national primary source or sources:

For the final assignment, students will be divided into three groups, and each group will create a PowerPoint presentation. Using the CDC (Centers for Disease Control) and WHO (World Health Organization) websites, students will create a PowerPoint presentation about preventive measures to avoid or lessen the damage of an epidemic. The following issues need to be addressed in the PowerPoint:

1. What is a pandemic? How are diseases rated?
2. What is the H1N1 virus? How is it different from other influenza viruses?
3. What are the symptoms of the virus and how does it spread?
4. What precautions should individuals and groups take?
5. Is there treatment for the H1N1 virus?

The second group will also create a PowerPoint presentation examining the potential effects of an epidemic on the social, economic and political elements of our country. Using sources from the World Bank and the United States, the following questions need to be addressed in the presentation:

Global

1. Percent change of GDP in high-income and developing countries from mild, moderate and severe outbreaks.
2. Deaths in all countries from mild, moderate, and severe outbreaks.
3. Impact of mortality, illness and absenteeism, efforts to avoid infection on percentage change in GDP and total cost in trillions.

United States

1. Deaths, hospitalizations, outpatient visits, and total illnesses.
2. Percentage breakdown of age groups affected by illness.
3. Examine and summarize losses in income, days lost for illness and hospital costs.

Final Essay.

Students will visit a website with pro/con approaches to compulsory vaccination. After reading both articles, students will compose a short essay explaining which side of the issue they support. Students need to include their positions regarding personal liberty vs. the good of the community in their essays.

Urbana city ordinances from 1916

<http://www.usd116.org/ProfDev/AHTC/lessons/DPLhealth/urbanaordinances.pdf>

Newspaper articles from Urbana Courier

<http://www.usd116.org/ProfDev/AHTC/images/Flu-Epidemic-1918/images/policy1161919.jpg>

<http://www.usd116.org/ProfDev/AHTC/images/Flu-Epidemic-1918/images/policy1161919-2.jpg>

<http://www.usd116.org/ProfDev/AHTC/images/Flu-Epidemic-1918/images/convention.jpg>

<http://www.usd116.org/ProfDev/AHTC/images/Flu-Epidemic-1918/images/quarantine1201919.jpg>

Websites for prevention and education.

<http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/>

<http://www.who.int/csr/disease/swineflu/en/index.html>

Websites for economic data.

http://siteresources.worldbank.org/EXTAVIANFLU/Resources/EvaluatingAHIEconomics_2008.pdf

<http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/EID/vol5no5/meltzer.htm>

Final essay website.

http://www.helium.com/debates/79737-should-vaccinations-for-children-be-mandatory/side_by_side