

Exploring Ethics

the science and ethics forum

an ongoing series of public events, jointly sponsored by:
Center for Ethics in Science and Technology
and
Reuben H. Fleet Science Center

Facing Pandemics: Science, Ethics, and Uncertainty

Wednesday June 3, 2009

5:30 – 7 P.M.

Reuben H. Fleet Science Center

Panelists:

Francesca J. Torriani, M.D

Professor, Clinical Medicine, Department of Medicine, Division of Infectious Diseases, UC San Diego

Phillip Van Saun

Director, Continuity and Emergency Services, UC San Diego

The recent swine flu pandemic captured the attention and the worry of many of us. In simple terms, this epidemic was defined as a pandemic because it had spread rapidly not just through a local community, but through much of the world.

Modern science has been instrumental in better understanding the threats of infectious diseases, as well as providing us with tools to decrease the impact of those diseases. In some cases, our best recourse is an effective vaccine, but we also know that vaccine supplies are not always adequate, we frequently need new vaccines to match the evolution of infectious agents, and there are some risks of vaccination.

Another option is to treat infections when they occur with antibiotics or antiviral agents, but such treatments are often costly, they are variably effective, and if used inappropriately can help to shape the evolution of a more resistant strain of bacteria or virus.

But whether or not we already have effective vaccines, antibiotics, and antiviral agents, we can only guess as to whether a newly appearing pandemic will be either as severe or as widespread as may initially be feared.

Given these concerns, the focus of this discussion will be on how we should respond to such threats. How do we decide when and how to act? If decisions under crisis conditions are not always based on the most rational analysis, what can we do to better prepare ourselves individually and as a community when the next threat occurs?

Please join us and to help think through these important and timely questions.

The program and parking are free but please **RSVP** no later than **June 1**. To **RSVP**, go to <http://ethicscenter.ucsd.edu/2009June3.html>.

Once we receive your RSVP, we will send a confirmation with driving and parking details.

Center for Ethics in Science and Technology, <http://ethicscenter.net>

The Center for Ethics in Science and Technology is an independent center that has a close working relationship with UC San Diego, the University of San Diego, and San Diego State University. The mission of the Ethics Center is to foster science in the public interest by promoting awareness, understanding and discussion of the ethical implications of new developments in science and technology.

Reuben H. Fleet Science Center, <http://www.rhfleet.org>

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