



NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
September 17, 2007

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THE KEYSTONE CENTER WINS PRESTIGIOUS PUBLIC PARTICIPATION AWARD

KEYSTONE, COLORADO – The International Association of Public Participation has given its Project of the Year Award to The Keystone Center, the National Center for Immunization and Respiratory Disease of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and the Association of State and Territorial Health Organizations (ASTHO).

The Keystone Center, a national, non-profit public policy dialogue company based in Keystone, CO, was the public involvement consultant for the CDC's project, "Putting the Public in Public Health" contracted through the Association of State and Territorial Health Organizations (ASTHO). The Atlanta-based Federal agency is responsible for the nation's preparedness and planning for an influenza pandemic, which many experts say is certain to occur in the future.

The public engagement project, "Putting the Public in Public Health" was conducted by Keystone in the fall and winter of 2006-2007. Rather than engaging public health experts on how to control the spread of pandemic influenza in a community, the Keystone / CDC project conducted meetings in Atlanta, Syracuse, NY, Lincoln, NE, and Seattle and asked the people who live and work there to give the agency their best advice and recommendations on how to restrain the spread of the influenza virus using voluntary community control measures.

“Understanding where the public comes from on these issues is eminently important to having protective policies in place in the event of a pandemic flu outbreak.” said Peter Adler, President of The Keystone Center.

Keystone Senior Associate Don Greenstein, said the public engagement design was innovative in that it employed several tiers of stakeholder involvement, multiple locations, a guided process and electronic polling technology, all aimed at informing the CDC on how to deter the spread of influenza and keep communities safer during an influenza outbreak. The purpose of “Putting the Public in Public Health” was to gather from the general public ideas about how to help contain the spread of influenza by:

- Encouraging sick persons to stay at home if hospitalization is not required.
- Encouraging non-ill household contacts to stay at home for up to a week after exposure.
- Cancelling large public gatherings
- Closing schools and large day care facilities for up to 12 weeks
- Altering work patterns.

64% of the public supported all five actions. Additionally, the public commented that they would prefer that communities took action sooner rather than later with 66% wanting the above actions to be enacted when the flu outbreak is still outside the U.S. or when it first strikes the U.S. The full report can be found at:

http://keystone.org/spp/documents/FinalReport1_CommunityControl5_2007.pdf

In addition to the community control measures, The Keystone Center has worked with the CDC to engage the public and policy officials in pandemic influenza planning, and to set national health goals. Keystone is presently engaged in the final stage of influenza planning through a similar series of public meetings that will help the federal government make recommendations to states and localities for prioritizing the available vaccine throughout the country and in local communities when there is an influenza pandemic.

The International Association for Public Participation (IAP2) is an association of members who seek to promote and improve the practice of public participation in relation to individuals, governments, institutions, and other entities that affect the public interest in nations throughout the world.

The Keystone Center

Headquartered in Keystone, Colorado, The Keystone Center strives to equip citizens with the tools of democracy – a venue for deliberation, high-quality information, and critical-thinking skills to navigate tough problems and develop solutions. Through its two major programs, The Center for Science and Public Policy and the Center for Education, The Keystone Center improves decisions about long-term issues by helping thought-leaders and decision-makers effectively address technically complex, politically uncertain situations and by helping students learn and teachers teach. For more information on The Keystone Center, visit www.keystone.org.