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News Release

Public Health Emergencies Offer Teachable Moments

BETHESDA, Md. — Responses during times of medical emergencies and stress offer opportunities for adults and children to teach and learn. Educational resources available from the Center for the Study of Traumatic Stress, or CSTS, of the Uniformed Services University of the Health Sciences, or USU, at <http://www.cstsonline.org/pandemicflu.shtml>, may be helpful in understanding and explaining the risks and prevention of exposure to the H1N1 virus.

Among the available *Courage to Care* resources are: *Mental Health and Behavioral Guidelines for Response to a Pandemic Flu Outbreak*; *Adherence: Addressing a Range of Patient Health Behaviors*; *Caring for Children During Flu Season*; *Flu Season: A Teachable Moment*; and, *Health Behaviors to Decrease Risk of Flu Transmission*. The CSTS also has fact sheets specific to military families.

“The recent increase risk of exposure to this unique virus strain reminds us that the world is much more interconnected today,” said Dr. Robert Ursano, director of the CSTS. “A virus today can travel from Mexico, to the United States and even to the most remote parts of the world very efficiently. Fortunately this same interconnection allows us to recognize when this is happening and to take proper precautions to reduce the level of exposure. This also provides us another opportunity to remind our children about the importance of proper hygiene, including good hand washing.”

Courage to Care is an ongoing health communication initiative of USU and CSTS, which is part of the USU Department of Psychiatry and a partnering center of the Defense Centers of Excellence for Psychological Health and Traumatic Brain Injury.

Courage to Care disseminates timely and important issues to enhance and sustain the well-being of our military community. *Courage to Care* fact sheets are in the public domain and are available for reposting on outside organization’s Web sites and for redistribution. Each installment includes a fact sheet for healthcare professionals and a fact sheet for families and patients. *Courage to Care* can be distributed in office waiting areas, or on an organization’s Web site.

Located on the grounds of Bethesda’s National Naval Medical Center and across from the National Institutes of Health, USU is the nation’s federal school of medicine and graduate school of nursing. The university educates health care professionals dedicated to career service in the Department of Defense and the U.S. Public Health Service. Medical students are active-duty uniformed officers in the Army, Navy, Air Force and Public Health Service, who are being educated to deal with wartime casualties, natural disasters, emerging infectious diseases and other public health emergencies. Of the university’s more than 4,200 physician alumni, the vast majority serve on active-duty and are supporting operations in Iraq, Afghanistan and elsewhere, offering their leadership and expertise.

For more information, contact the Office of External Affairs at (301) 295-3981 or visit the USU Web site at: www.usuhs.mil.