Leading Voices in Public Health Lecture Series:

Thursday, April 25, 2013

“View from the Epicenter of an Evolving Public Health Crisis: Lessons Learned from the Multistate Fungal Meningitis Outbreak”

2nd Floor Ballroom, Millennium Centre
7:00 p.m.
Free and Open to Public
Livestream: http://elearning.etsu.edu/publichealthlive.htm

Commissioner John Dreyzehner, MD, MPH, FACOEM
Tennessee Department of Health

The Tennessee Department of Health, through a rapid interdisciplinary team, played a vital role in the identification and response to the multi-state fungal meningitis outbreak. As of March 25, there have been over 700 cases, and 50 deaths, reported in 20 states. Tennessee, with 150 cases, has one of the largest number of reported cases of any state.

According to the CDC, this is “the largest outbreak of healthcare-associated infections in the U.S.” USA Today wrote, “The quick work of Tennessee disease detectives kept the outbreak from affecting more patients in the state.” In that same article, Paul Jarris, Executive Director of the Association of State and Territorial Health Officials, said, “By the time we learned this was a problem around the country, the information from Tennessee had already narrowed it down to what the problem was . . . Imagine how frightening it would have been if 23 states had a meningitis outbreak and we didn’t know what caused it.” He called the actions of the Tennessee Department of Health “a textbook case of how to do it right.”

John Dreyzehner is the Commissioner of Health for Tennessee, and played a pivotal role in coordinating the state-wide response to the epidemic. His perspectives on this dramatic, nation-wide outbreak, and his interpretations of the “lessons learned” are vitally important for every public health professional.

Dr. Dreyzehner is well-known to the ETSU community—having served for nine years as a regional Health Department Director in southwest Virginia and holding an adjunct appointment in the College of Public Health. He was a frequent attendee at previous Leading Voices of Public Health lectures, and is now making his second appearance as a speaker in the series.

Sponsored by: The College of Public Health, The Public Health Student Association, East Tennessee State University and LIFEPATH-Tennessee Public Health Training Center

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