

STATE BOARD OF HEALTH

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BURLINGTON, VT., Sept. 27, 1918

Honorable Horace F. Graham,
Governor of Vermont,
Craftsbury, Vt.

*In answer to my
letter of 9/25/18
Oct 1 1918*

Dear Sir,-

I am enclosing herewith copies of two circulars which have been sent out by the State Board of Health to all health officers and which will show you what we have done in the matter of the so-called "Spanish Influenza". In addition to this, I have personally had talks with health officers in all the principal towns and in many of the places, where the epidemic is most widespread, schools and public places have been closed and several conventions have been called off.

The epidemic in Vermont does not seem to be running such a virulent course as it is in Massachusetts. Practically all our cases have started from families who visited Camp Devens during the illness of their relatives but, for some reason or other, the disease seems to be taking a milder course in this state. We are watching the epidemic very carefully and, if the conditions seem to warrant a general order, we shall not hesitate to issue it.

Yours very truly,

"SPANISH INFLUENZA"

(Instructions to Vermont Health Officers.)

Present indications are that within a few weeks, and possibly a few days, Vermont will be visited by an epidemic of the so-called Spanish Influenza. Already there are many cases at some of our seaports and the disease will gradually invade the interior states.

The apparent seriousness of this disease makes it necessary that some precautions be taken to limit its spread. The disease is not essentially different from the influenza or grippe which we have been familiar with for a good many years (it is called "Spanish" because the present pandemic began in Spain); the same germ causes this disease; it is present in the secretions of the nose, throat and air passages; it is given off in the act of coughing, sneezing and talking by droplet infection. The symptoms are fever, chills, head and joint pains and catarrhal discharges from the nose, throat and eyes. These symptoms last about three days.

The disease itself is not serious. The complications frequently are. Hence, the disease should not be slighted. The patient should go to bed at once and call his physician. The complications are bronchial pneumonia, occasionally lobar pneumonia and nephritis. These, of course, are serious.

The disease is hereby declared to be a contagious and infectious disease, under Section 6203, General Laws. In accordance with said section, the following rules and regulations are promulgated:

"Influenza is hereby added to the list of diseases to be reported by physicians. Every physician shall promptly report each case attended or prescribed for by him to the local health officer. The health officer shall visit and placard the home premises of the patient".

All persons should understand that this is a contagious disease and that the patient should be isolated in the home and especially from all visitors and neighbors. Handkerchiefs, napkins and towels used by the case may indirectly cause the disease. It is quite possible that healthy persons may become carriers. Children in families in which there are cases should not attend school; and no one from such families should attend public gatherings, especially picture shows, or other indoor entertainments. Rational observance of these precautions may do much to limit the spread of this disease and consequent effects.

Health Officers will promptly report all cases to the State Board of Health, as these reports must be forwarded to Washington at the earliest possible moment.

Per Order of the State Board of Health.

Charles F. Dalton, Secretary.

SPANISH INFLUENZA.

Further Instructions to Health Officers.

While the State Board of Health probably will not issue any order for the general closing of schools and public assemblies in the state, attention of health officers is called to Section 6221 which provides that health officers

"May order churches and schools and all places of public entertainment to be closed and may forbid and prevent the assembling of people in any place when the State Board of Health deems that the public health and safety so demand and provided that said State Board of Health so certifies to said health officer."

If local boards of health decide that the prevalence or virulence of the epidemic in their own communities is such that special precautions are necessary, the State Board of Health will approve orders closing schools and other public places.

Isolation of persons affected with influenza should be continued for at least a week and longer if the acute or complicating symptoms persist. Persons exposed to the disease should be required to separate themselves from the public for a period of at least four days from the time of exposure. Houses in which the disease is present should be placarded with a sign bearing the word "Influenza". Health officers should make it plain to all persons that the disease is spread by coughing and sneezing in public or around other people.

Public funerals will be permitted in case of persons dying from this disease or its complications, but persons who have been in intimate contact with the case or who are then sick with the disease should not be allowed to attend such funeral.

Cases and deaths occurring during the week should be reported to the State Board of Health every Saturday so that the state record can be telegraphed to Washington on Monday.

State Board of Health.

Charles F. Dalton, Secretary.

September 27, 1918.