

A Great Emergency

Southwestern Division
American Red Cross

1250 Railway Exchange Building, St. Louis

October 4, 1918.

FOR IMMEDIATE ATTENTION RED CROSS OFFICIALS

PRECAUTIONS AGAINST EPIDEMIC OF SPANISH INFLUENZA

1. The American Red Cross War Council, at the urgent request of the United States Public Health Service, has agreed to assist the Government in combating the spread of Spanish Influenza. It is impossible to tell when or where the disease will show itself, and no community should fail to take every possible precaution. The fact that you have no cases today is no reason why you may not have fifty tomorrow. A telegram from one of our large Chapters today discloses a serious situation where that community was free forty-eight hours before. Immediate action is imperative.

2. The United States Public Health Service has issued a special bulletin, which it has requested the Red Cross to reproduce in large quantities and, through the agency of Red Cross Chapters, get to as many civilians as possible in the shortest possible time. Immediately upon receipt of the Washington wire, this office engaged a printer who ran his presses all night to get this bulletin to you as soon as possible. It is being sent to you in liberal quantity by the fastest delivery.

YOUR GOVERNMENT ASKS YOU TO DROP EVERYTHING ELSE AND SEE THAT EVERY CITIZEN OR HEAD OF A HOUSEHOLD GETS A COPY OF THIS BULLETIN AT ONCE, and your Red Cross leaders are relying on you to perform that service in as efficient a manner as possible.

We are sending this bulletin to Chapters, to Branches and to Auxiliaries, and a copy of this letter is going with each package of bulletins. The Chapter Executive Committee should immediately call a meeting to discuss ways and means of getting this bulletin to the people in as effective a manner as possible, and should see that the Branches and Auxiliaries carry out the instructions. In handing out this bulletin the following suggestions are offered:

- A. Place it in the hands of every school child through the agency of the public schools, with definite instructions to take it home to their parents and relatives.
- B. Hang it in drug stores, post offices, street cars, railroad stations, manufacturing plants and other public places where people can have access to it.
- C. Have rural free delivery carriers place one in each mail box.
- D. Ministers should be asked to refer to the leaflet during the sermon and to urge members to read it carefully.
- E. Newspapers will gladly reproduce the leaflet and will write a story urging their readers to take the necessary precautions.
- F. Health departments and physicians will co-operate in its distribution.
- G. Boy Scouts and Camp Fire Girls might be used to assist in the distribution of the pamphlet.
- H. Follow the same instructions in the distribution of the special dodger signed by Dr. F. G. Pernoud, Medical Advisor to the Southwestern Division Red Cross.

MOBILIZE NURSING SERVICE AS FOLLOWS:

I. Kinds of Nurses wanted:

First: Graduate Nurses—as many as can be secured.

Second: Nurses' Aids.

Third: Undergraduate Nurses.

Fourth: Practical Nurses.

Fifth: Lay Women Helpers. (The women who have taken the Red Cross course in Elementary Hygiene and Home Care of the Sick, and who have their certificates.)

Every person falling within these classes should be interviewed at once and told of the probable need of their services and the possibility of their being called for immediate service at any time.

First: Branch and Auxiliary Action.

Every Branch and Auxiliary will immediately interview every woman falling in the above five classes and get her definite answer as to whether or not she is available for service, either in the community or elsewhere, if needed. As fast as interviews are held her name and address should be sent to the Chairman of your County Red Cross Chapter at the earliest possible moment and a definite statement as to whether she accepts or declines the call. The information on each woman should include the points enumerated in the paragraphs immediately below, covering the Chapters.

Second: As to Chapters.

A. The Chapter Chairman in conjunction with the Chairman of the Chapter Committee on Nursing Activities should immediately card index the reports from branches and auxiliaries,—3 x 5-inch cards. Each card will show the name, address, age and training of the person who offers her services, and as to what class of the five kinds of nursing personnel she belongs.

The card should also state whether or not she is available for immediate service, and whether that service is offered for her own community or on call elsewhere.

B. Chapter Chairmen will immediately write the Division Office, sending us, upon cards 3 x 5 inches, one name to each card, an exact copy of the card index on file in their office of those available for **service elsewhere** and the class to which they belong. This record should be sent without delay, and continued from day to day as fast as the cards are filed in Chapter headquarters. Do not wait to get eight or ten people but send in the names filed each day. We will add to your list as fast as you notify us of additions to your personnel.

Each card should show the name of the Chapter and the Chapter headquarters.

C. Large Chapters should aim to register for mobilization their nursing service in units made up of the following personnel:

One Graduate Nurse, to be the head of a unit of from five to fifteen undergraduate nurses, nurses' aids, practical nurses and lay women helpers; there to be more than one graduate nurse, if possible.

Such a Graduate Nurse can easily train and direct a unit so made up to handle an emergency in a given situation, and if such a unit is needed for service elsewhere, when offered, it will be called as a unit.

Large Chapters will immediately bend every effort to secure as many of these units as possible, and to notify the Division Office, by wire, as fast as each unit is ready for mobilization, sending the name and address of the graduate nurse in charge. Considerable newspaper publicity will be required to put this over.

Immediately upon the formation of the unit, they should be called together and given instructions by leading physicians, and by the graduate nurse, on the care of patients stricken with influenza, so as to be as nearly prepared as possible if called for service.

Compensation of Nurses.

You are authorized to inform people offering themselves, or who are drafted for the service, that when called into service by the Southwestern Division Red Cross Committee on Influenza, that the Graduate Nurses will be paid \$75.00; undergraduates, practical nurses, nurses' aids and laywomen helpers (Class 5 under "Kinds of Nursing Service Wanted") will be paid from \$35.00 to \$50.00.

Both the above rates of pay will be with expenses, which will include maintenance, transportation from their own community to the point of difficulty, and traveling expenses of \$4.00 per day, coming and going. Full details on this point will be sent later.

How Nurses Will be Called.

Nursing Personnel will be notified either by direct wire from the Southwestern Division Red Cross Committee on Influenza to the Chapter Chairman, or to the head of the unit.

Additional instructions on this point will be sent later.

Other Steps to Take.

Call immediately on the Mayor of the City, the Commissioner of Health, and other interested public officials, and advise them that you are distributing the bulletin above mentioned, and that in accordance with instructions from the Division Office you are registering for mobilization your nursing service for any emergency.

Inadequate Hospital Supplies and Medicines.

The Division Office may be able to help you to secure emergency hospital supplies of all kinds, in case there should be a shortage in your city. Keep us advised on this point.

Relatives Should Not Go to Cantonment Towns.

Chapter Chairmen should give wide publicity to the statement that it is undesirable for relatives to go to cantonment towns to be near soldiers in the towns who may be sick in base hospitals with influenza. There can be no guarantee that a person who thus leaves their home and their friends can receive even reasonable care in a cantonment town which is already overcrowded, and which may in turn have an epidemic fall upon it. Use every precaution to keep your people in their own community.

If the Spanish Influenza should make its appearance within the jurisdiction of your Chapter, we will expect you to handle it to the best of your ability without calling for outside aid. However, we do not expect you to take any chances, if, in the judgment of your Executive Committee, and upon the advice of your health authorities, you believe that additional assistance is needed in the way of nursing service, hospital supplies, etc., you will be expected to notify us by wire of the exact situation, detailing the number of people afflicted on the day before, as well as on the day on which the telegram is sent.

If the spread of influenza can be checked, we will be able to assist you easily enough. We can make no promises of definite assistance in the way of nursing personnel, but we will do the best we can. The ability to mobilize and send personnel depends absolutely upon the rapidity and thoroughness with which Chapters individually organize and mobilize the nursing personnel and report same to the Division Office.

Additional Action.

American Red Cross will co-operate further with the Federal Health Service upon their request from time to time. As soon as the Washington plans are formulated, definite instructions will be sent Chapters regarding the kinds of service and method of organization to meet the emergency.

Southwestern Division Red Cross Committee on Influenza.

We have organized a committee at Division Headquarters to meet all emergencies caused by the spread of the influenza, as this emergency may arise at any place in the Southwestern Division. This committee is made up of the several division directors who are concerned, and several other strong Red Cross members.

An efficient organization is being perfected, so that no matter what the call, we will be able to render some service. The Committee will keep its office open day and night until the emergency is over.

All telegrams and letters bearing on the subject of this letter should be addressed to the Southwestern Division, Red Cross Committee on Influenza, 1250 Railway Exchange Building.

Conclusion.

Here is one of the greatest tests that we have been called upon to face, and I am relying with confidence on each Chapter Chairman to see that the above instructions are carried out in every particular, and that additional instructions which will come from time to time are promptly handled.

Yours for service,

GEORGE W. SIMMONS,
Manager of Southwestern Division.

Suggested Uniform Enrolling Card.

(Size 3x5 inches)

Name of Chapter.....	
Address.....	
Name in Full.....	Telephone No.....
City or Town.....	State.....
Permanent Address.....	
Enrolled Red Cross Nurse.....	
Home Defense Nurse.....	
Nurses' Aid.....	
Practical Nurse.....	
Lay Woman Helper.....	
Entered Service.....	Date.....
Relieved from Service.....	
Other information (state on back of card).....	