The Northwest Center for Public Health Practice (NWCPHP) has provided a number of services for our region regarding H1N1, including research pilot projects and up-to-date resources. During both waves of the recent H1N1 influenza outbreak, one of our faculty members, Andy Stergachis, has served as pharmacy advisor on the response team at Public Health — Seattle & King County (PHSKC). He has worked closely with the health department and the pharmacy community on the distribution of antiviral stockpiles and pharmacy-based vaccinations.

The history of influenza pandemics in the 20th century has highlighted the importance of preparedness. NWCPHP has been particularly involved with pandemic flu preparedness since 2006 when it began assisting the University of Washington (UW) with planning, implementing, and evaluating a university-wide pandemic preparedness exercise. In 2009, NWCPHP created, implemented, and evaluated a tabletop exercise for the UW School of Public Health (SPH), which emphasized pandemic preparedness and business continuity planning. (tabletop available at www.nwcphp.org.)

We continue to work closely with SPH in a variety of activities stemming from this exercise. Pandemic influenza preparedness and response have been built into the curricula for the courses and certificate programs SPH offers to students enrolled in the University's health sciences schools.

Preparedness is for everyone, so we have made the resources from these exercises available at no charge. NWCPHP has also assisted other organizations with their pandemic flu preparedness, such as PHSKC, where we have been involved with planning, implementing, and evaluating a coordinated series of pandemic preparedness exercises.