It's a done deal



KEVIN JOHNSON/Colby Free Press

Todd Stramel, left, organizing efforts for a new youth center; Ben and Elsie Keller, donating land for the project; and Jada Tubbs, board member and granddaughter of the Kellers, reviewed paperwork in the land transfer. The youth center, known as the Multipurpose Activity Center, will be located south on Franklin Avenue by Amber Waves Apartments.

Stressed out on the job

Dear Dr. Brothers: I just started a new job at a small startup company, which gives me a lot more responsibility and is much more time-intensive than my previous job. The extra work, in addition to the difficulty of starting at a new company, has made me so stressed out that I can barely function. I'm in a bad mood almost all the time, and I find my temper flaring up at the smallest provocation. Will the stress decrease as I go along? Is there anything else I can do to calm myself down? I want to keep my new job, but not if this is the price I have to pay! -- M.S.

Dear M.S.: The good news is that you've recognized that your bad mood and temper flare-ups are caused by stress from work. Because you've recognized this, you can take steps to de-stress. Since you want to keep your job, you should try healthy ways of reducing stress, which can include reading, listening to music, socializing with friends, exercising or praying/religious practice. High levels of stress also can lead to health problems, so reducing your stress level not only will improve your mood and personal relationships, but also your physical and the case, but if her "mean girl" psychological well-being.

in stress level. According to a national survey done by the American Psychological Association this year, one-third of Americans are living with extreme stress, and almost half of Americans believe their stress level has increased in the past five years. Money and work are the leading causes of stress for Americans. A little bit of stress can be a positive influence at work, but it sounds like your job is causing you too much stress to be good for you.

Dear Dr. Brothers: I started a new job a few months ago, and I've gotten along well with all of my co-workers, except for one other woman. This woman seems to dislike me, and talks and whispers to others in the office about me. Because my company is small and we share common working areas, I can overhear her talking about me behind my back. I don't think I've done anything wrong. Should



Dr. Joyce Brothers

• Ask Dr. Brothers

I confront her about it, or just try to have a thicker skin? -- C.L.

Dear C.L.: First, it's important to find out whether this woman thinks that you have wronged her in some way. As a new employee entering into an office with an established professional -- and social -- hierarchy, it's possible that you disrupted this ladder without realizing it. It could be that this woman wanted to offer the job to a friend of hers, or that she simply likes the location of your desk better than hers. There's no way to find out unless you ask.

Once you've determined whether she has any basis to dislike or resent you, you can talk to her about how you feel. It might be tempting to just wait and see, hoping that she will stop her immature behavior if she sees that it doesn't affect you. This could be tactics are making you uncom-You are not alone in this increase for table and unhappy, you should confront her. Since you get along well with your other co-workers,

don't hesitate to ask for their help. They've probably noticed that she is the only one creating a negative environment for you in the office, and would be happy to back you up. The best thing you can do is get her to talk to you, instead of

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Some states not stocking up on pandemic medicines

WASHINGTON (AP) — Seven states have yet to participate in a federal program to buy antivirals for a potential influenza pandemic. Thirteen states do not have adequate plans to distribute vaccines and medical supplies from the Strategic National Stockpile.

Those findings and others are part of a new report on how well states have prepared for public health emergencies. The report concluded that states have made significant progress since the terrorist and anthrax attacks in 2001. However, critical gaps remain.

Seven states performed adequately in each of the 10 categories that were measured, which earned them a score of 10 from the Trust for America's Health, a research group. The top scores went to Illinois, Kentucky, Nebraska, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Tennessee and Virginia.

The states that got the lowest score were Arkansas, Iowa, Mississippi, Nevada, Wisconsin and Wyoming.

The federal government has had a difficult time measuring progress when it comes to the billions of dollars it has sent states over the past six years to improve preparedness. The money went to upgrade laboratories, buy medical supplies and conduct training exercises.

The Bush administration has encouraged states to stock up on antivirals in the event of an influenza pandemic. Under one program, the federal government will pay for a $quarter\,of\,the\,cost\,of\,buying\,Tamiflu$ or Relenza, and states pay the remainder for a combined investment of about \$680 million. Antivirals reduce the severity of influenza.

Seven states have so far declined to purchase any antivirals, according to the report: Colorado, Connecticut, Florida, Massachusetts, Mississippi, North Dakota and Rhode Island. Several more have bought only a fraction of what

States that are not buying the full amount of anitvirals ... are putting their own citizens at risk."

Department of Health and Human Services

they're entitled to under the federal

"If a significant number of states don't pick up their share of responsibility, then the country as a whole is less protected," said Jeffrey Levi, executive director of Trust for America's Health.

A spokesman for the Department of Health and Human Services said that states have until June 2008 to get their orders in. All states have told the federal government they plan on participating, he said. Many have only ordered part of the medicine that's available to them.

"States that are not buying the full amount of antivirals we have allocated under this program are putting their own citizens at risk,' said HHS Spokesman Bill Hall.

The report also highlighted the need for nearly half the states to update their "Good Samaritan" laws. Such laws create liability shields for those who come to the aid of another at the scene of an emergency. The trust said states need shield laws that can cover days or even weeks of voluntary work, such as a shield law tied to a declared emergency by

The report also warned that a decrease in federal funding could offset many of the improvements that states have made since 2001.

Dr. Irwin Redlener, associate dean for public health preparedness at Columbia University, said he's concerned that federal funding levels for hospital preparedness, now at about \$400 million annually, are in- org/

adequate. He said the hospitals need an initial investment of \$5 billion just to cover existing personnel and equipment needs, plus \$1 billion a year thereafter. He said the money is needed for additional beds, ventilators, medicine and personnel.

"This has been a situation going in reverse," Redlener said.

The trade association representing state health officials said that money for emergency preparedness has also been divvied up among more entities in recent years, which don't coordinate their work. They want the money for preparedness to be distributed through the states.

"It's important that we knit together all these different entities getting federal funding," said Dr. Paul Jarris, executive director of the Association of State and Territorial Health Officials.

Among the other categories measured, the report said

- Flu vaccination rates for the elderly dropped in 11 states. Six states cut their public

health department budgets last - All 50 states and the District of Columbia held emergency drills

with their health department and state National Guard. - Twenty-one states do not have key liability protections for health care volunteers who respond to

On the Net: Trust for America's Health: http://healthyamericans.

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