

Appendix 9 - Pandemic Influenza Community Mitigation Interim Planning Guide for Individuals and Families

Purpose

This Interim Planning Guide for Individuals and Families is provided as a supplement to the *Interim Pre-Pandemic Planning Guidance: Community Strategy for Pandemic Influenza Mitigation in the United States—Early, Targeted, Layered Use of Nonpharmaceutical Interventions*. The guide is intended to assist in pre-pandemic planning. Individuals and families, employers, schools, and other organizations will be asked to take certain steps (described below) to help limit the spread of a pandemic, mitigate disease and death, lessen the impact on the economy, and maintain societal functioning. This guidance is based upon the best available current data and will be updated as new information becomes available. During the planning process, Federal, State, local, tribal, and territorial officials should review the laws, regulations, and policies that relate to these recommendations, and they should include stakeholders in the planning process and resolution of issues.

Individuals and families will have an essential role in protecting themselves and the public's health and safety when an influenza pandemic occurs. This *Pandemic Influenza Community Mitigation Interim Planning Guide for Individuals and Families* provides guidance describing how individuals and families might prepare for and respond to an influenza pandemic. At the onset of an influenza pandemic, public health officials will determine the severity of the pandemic and recommend actions to protect the community's health. People who become severely ill may need to be cared for in a hospital. However, most people with influenza will be safely cared for at home. Community mitigation recommendations will be based on the severity of the pandemic and may include the following:

1. Asking ill people to voluntarily remain at home and not go to work or out in the community for about 7-10 days or until they are well and can no longer spread the infection to others (ill individuals will be treated with influenza antiviral medications, as appropriate, if these medications are effective and available).
2. Asking members of households with a person who is ill to voluntarily remain at home for about 7 days (household members may be provided with antiviral medications, if these medications are effective and sufficient in quantity and feasible mechanisms for their distribution have been developed).
3. Dismissing students from schools (including public and private schools as well as colleges and universities) and school-based activities and closure of childcare programs for up to 12 weeks, coupled with protecting children and teenagers through social distancing in the community to include reductions of out-of-school social contacts and community mixing. Childcare programs discussed in this guidance include centers or facilities that provide care to any number of children in a nonresidential setting, large family childcare homes that provide care for seven or more children in the home of the provider and small family childcare homes that provide care to six or fewer children in the home of the provider.¹

4. Recommending social distancing of adults in the community, which may include cancellation of large public gatherings; changing workplace environments and schedules to decrease social density and preserve a healthy workplace to the greatest extent possible without disrupting essential services; and ensuring work-leave policies to align incentives and facilitate adherence with the measures outlined above.

Planning now for a severe pandemic will assist you and your family as you prepare for interventions that might be recommended. Resources are available at www.pandemicflu.gov/plan/individual/checklist.html and www.ready.gov/america/index.html. In addition, reliable, accurate, and timely information on the status and severity of a pandemic and recommendations for implementation of pandemic mitigation strategies is available at www.pandemicflu.gov. Additional information is available from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Hotline: 1-800-CDC-INFO (1-800-232-4636). This line is available in English and Spanish, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. TTY: 1-888-232-6348. Questions can be e-mailed to cdcinfo@cdc.gov.

Recommendations for Planning

1. Plan for ill individuals to remain at home

- Be prepared to stay at home if you are ill with pandemic influenza. Information on taking care of ill people at home will be posted on www.pandemicflu.gov.
 - It will be important to have extra supplies on hand during a pandemic, as you may not be able to get to a store or stores may be out of supplies. You should have a reserve of at least a two-week supply of water and food; however, if the pandemic is severe, community disruption may last for a longer period. If community water supplies are not suitable for consumption during a pandemic, your local water utility or public health authorities will notify the community.
 - Periodically check your regular prescription drugs to ensure a continuous supply in your home.
 - Have any nonprescription drugs and other health supplies on hand, including a thermometer, pain relievers, stomach remedies, cough and cold medicines, and other over-the-counter medicines that you and your family use on a regular basis.
 - Designate one person in the household who could be the caregiver if anyone in the household becomes ill with pandemic influenza. Develop an alternate plan for someone to be the caregiver if that person becomes sick.
 - Talk with neighbors, friends, and family about your plans for staying at home if you or someone in your household is ill. Share ideas.
 - Ensure that each household has a current list of emergency contacts in your community, including mental health and counseling resources.

2. Plan for all household members of a person who is ill to voluntarily remain at home

- Be prepared to stay at home if someone in your household is ill. Information on taking care of ill people at home will be posted on www.pandemicflu.gov.
 - Have any nonprescription drugs and other health supplies on hand, including a thermometer, pain relievers, stomach remedies, cough and cold medicines, and other over-the-counter medicines that you and your family use on a regular basis.

- Talk with family members and members of your household about how they would be cared for if they become ill and about what will be needed to care for them in your or their home.
- Designate one person in the household who could be the caregiver if anyone in the household becomes ill with pandemic flu. Make plans for a backup if that person gets ill.
- Consider how to care for people in your household with special needs in case the services they rely on are not available.
- Talk with neighbors, friends, and family about your plans for staying at home if someone in your household is ill. Share ideas.
- Ensure that each household has a current list of emergency contacts in your community, including mental health and counseling resources.

3. Plan for dismissal of students and childcare closure

- If you have children in your household, make plans for their care if officials recommend dismissal of students from schools and closure of childcare programs.
 - Plan and arrange now for who will care for children if schools and childcare programs dismiss students and children during a pandemic. Plan for an extended period (up to 12 weeks) in case the pandemic is severe.
 - Do not plan to bring children to the workplace if childcare cannot be arranged.
 - If you have children in a college or university, have a plan for the student to relocate or return home, if desired, or if the college/university dismisses students, at the onset of a Category 4-5 pandemic.
 - Plan home-learning activities and exercises. Have materials, such as books, on hand.
 - Public health officials will likely recommend that children and teenagers do not gather in groups in the community during a pandemic. Plan recreational activities that your children can do at home.
 - Find out now about the plans at your child's school or childcare facility during a pandemic.
- In a severe pandemic, parents will be advised to protect their children by reducing out-of-school social contacts and mixing with other children. Although limiting all outside contact may not be feasible, parents may be able to develop support systems with co-workers, friends, families, or neighbors, if they continue to need childcare. For example, they could prepare a plan in which two to three families work together to supervise and provide care for a small group of infants and young children while their parents are at work (studies suggest that childcare group size of less than six children may be associated with fewer respiratory infections).²

4. Plan for workplace and community social distancing measures

- Become familiar with social distancing actions that may be used during a pandemic to modify frequency and type of person-to-person contact (e.g., reducing hand-shaking, limiting face-to-face meetings, promoting teleworking, liberal/unscheduled leave policies, and staggered shifts).
- Talk to your employer

- Talk to your employer about the pandemic influenza plan for your workplace to include issues about benefits, leave, telework, and other possible policies to go into effect during a pandemic.
- Ask your employer about how your employer will continue during a pandemic if key staff cannot come to work.
- Plan for the possible reduction or loss of income if you are unable to work or your place of employment is closed. Consider maintaining a cash reserve.
- Check with your employer or union about leave policies for workers who are ill, live in a household with someone ill with pandemic influenza, or have to take off work to take care of children.
- Find out if you can work from home.
- Discuss alternative ways of holding meetings at work, including, for example, teleconferences, during a pandemic.
- Find out how you will receive information from your employer during a pandemic.
- Prepare backup plans in case public gatherings, such as community events and meetings and worship services, are cancelled.
 - Talk with others in your community about other ways of communicating during a pandemic if public gatherings are cancelled
 - Plan for recreational activities that you and your household members can do at home if community gatherings are cancelled during a pandemic.
 - Discuss with your faith-based organization or place of worship their plans for communicating with members during a pandemic.

5. Help others

- Prepare backup plans for taking care of loved ones who are far away.
- Find volunteers who want to help people in need, such as elderly neighbors, single parents of small children, or people without the resources to get the medical help they will need.
- Think of ways you can reach out to others in your neighborhood or community to help them plan for and respond to a pandemic.

References:

¹American Academy of Pediatrics. Children in Out-of-Home Child Care: Classification of Care Service. In: Pickering LK, ed. Red Book: 2003 Report of the Committee on Infectious Diseases. 26th ed. Elk Grove Village, IL: American Academy of Pediatrics; 2003:124.

²Bradley RH. Child care and common communicable illnesses in children aged 37 to 54 months. Arch Pediatr Adolesc Med. 2003 Feb;157(2):196-200.