

Preparing for a Pandemic What Business and Organization Leaders Need to Know



Kalamazoo County Health & Community Services Department 3299 Gull Road • PO Box 42 • Nazareth, MI 49074-0042 Phone: 269-373-5200 • Fax: 269-373-5363 Web: www.kalcounty.com/hcs

Kalamazoo County Health & Community Services Department programs are open to all without regard to race, color, national origin, sex, or disability.

Introduction

An influenza, or flu, pandemic happens when a new flu virus appears that easily spreads from person-to-person and around the world. A pandemic flu would spread rapidly, and would affect all age groups. It would cause illness in a high proportion of those infected. The World Health Organization warns that a flu pandemic could infect between 25 and 30 percent of the world's population.

With that much of the population and work force affected, a flu pandemic would disrupt your organization-perhaps even force it to close down for a time.

The Federal Government recommends that all employers, governments, and individuals plan with the assumption that:

- Up to 40% of the workforce may be absent for periods of about two weeks or more at the height of a pandemic, with other absences occurring before and after the main peak.
- Employees will choose to stay home from work due to personal illness, to care for an ill family member, or due to fear.
- An individual can be infected with influenza two days before they feel any symptoms. This means that they can start transmitting the virus to others before they even realize they are sick.
- An individual can still pass the virus to others days after they start feeling better.
- Epidemics will last six to eight weeks in affected communities and may reoccur in another wave of illness.

Once a pandemic virus emerges, it is too late to begin planning or to begin collaboration. Experts cannot predict when the next flu pandemic may occur, or how severe it will be, but everyone agrees that preparation is key.

"But we're more ready today than we were yesterday.

And we'll be more prepared tomorrow than we are today."

Michael Leavitt, HHS Secretary

For more information on pandemic flu, visit the following websites or call the telephone numbers provided.

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services www.pandemicflu.gov

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

www.cdc.gov 1.800-CDC-INFO (1-800-232-4636) inquiry@cdc.gov

Michigan Department of Community Health

www.michigan.gov/mdch

Kalamazoo County Health and Community Services

www.kalcounty.com/hcs

Emergency Hotline: 269-373-5300

Office: 269-373-5200

Kalamazoo County Health and Community Services Department staff can provide guidance and support as you conduct pandemic influenza planning. For assistance, contact one of the individuals below.

Consultation and On-site Briefings

Linda Vail Buzas Phone: 269-373-5160

E-mail: lvbuza@kalcounty.com

Plan Review, Planning and Response

Bob Hale Phone: 269-373-5061

E-mail: rahale@kalcounty.com

Risk Communications

Erin Campbell Phone: 269-373-5226

E-mail: ekcamp@kalcounty.com

What to do in the event of an outbreak

If a flu pandemic strikes, government health officials will issue information and warnings, and will work with the media to disseminate advice on how to avoid becoming ill. Your organization's managers, human resources department and employees should pay close attention to the guidance provided by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the Michigan Department of Community Health (MDCH), and the Kalamazoo County Health & Community Services Department (KCHCS). Other organizations that provide assistance in public health emergencies include the American Red Cross and the World Health Organization.

In a worst-case scenario, "business as usual" may cease. Government health officials may have to implement dramatic measures, including shutting down certain businesses that involve high levels of interaction with the public, such as restaurants and theaters. Health officials may also have to close schools, restrict travel, and cancel public events such as concerts, conventions, tribal gatherings, and sporting events.

So You Think You Have the Flu

The symptoms of influenza are:

- Fever low (99 F) to high (104 F), usually for three days, but may persist for four to eight days. Sometimes fever will go away and return a day later.
- Aching muscles
- Cough
- Headache

- Joint aches
- Eye pain
- Feeling very cold or having shaking chills
- Feeling very tired
- Sore throat
- Runny or stuffy nose

If you have some of these symptoms listed:

Stay Home!

Rest!

Drink fluids!

Take fever reducers!

(acetaminophen or ibuprofen)



But if you

- Are unable to drink enough fluids
- Have the fever for more then three to five days
- Feel better, than develop a fever again

Call your health care provider!

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Or if you

- Become short of breath or you develop wheezing
- Cough up blood
- Have pain in your chest with breathing
- Have heart disease (like angina or congestive heart failure) and you develop chest pain
- Become unable to walk or sit up, or function normally

Seek immediate medical attention

Plan now to keep your business or organization going during a pandemic.

"Continuity of operations" means ensuring that essential organization functions can survive a natural disaster, technological failure, human error, or other disruption. In recent times, assuring continuity of operations has also meant planning for terrorist-related biological, chemical or nuclear attacks.

Many existing continuity of operations plans anticipate disruptions such as fire, earthquake, and flood; these events are restricted to a certain geographic area, and the time frames are fairly well defined and limited. A flu pandemic, however, demands a different set of continuity assumptions since it would be widely dispersed geographically and potentially arrive in waves that could last several months at a time.

Depending on the flu strain and based on previous pandemics, public health officials project cumulative absentee rates of 25 percent to 30 percent over three to four months. Absentees will include sick employees and those who must care for others who are sick. Fear will also likely impact rates of absenteeism.

Here are some steps you can take now to maintain business continuity. Keep in mind that many strategies take time to implement.

- Check that existing contingency plans are applicable to a pandemic. In particular, check to see that core business activities can be sustained over several months.
- Clearly document your plans, policies and procedures. Include emergency leave and building closure policies.
- Identify your most essential business functions and services. Include payroll, accounting and administrative functions.
- Assign decision-making authority to your leaders and managers. Determine who will activate your pandemic emergency plan and handle personnel issues, such as absenteeism and off-site working arrangements.
- Outline who will fill key positions and who will serve as back-ups to these positions. Develop job action sheets that give detailed instructions on fulfilling essential job functions.
- Identify and prepare multiple alternate worksites. Use telecommuting and other technologies to allow employees to work form home.
- Make sure you have multiple ways of communicating with your employees and customers in order to limit face-to-face interactions.
- Keep your critical business records and databases up-to-date, backed-up in electronic and hard copy formats, and accessible to all key employees.

- Update sick leave and family and medical leave policies and communicate with employees about the importance of staying away from the workplace if they become ill. Concern about lost wages is the largest deterrent to self-quarantine.
- Maintain a healthy work environment by ensuring adequate air circulation and posting tips on how to stop the spread of germs at work. Promote hand and respiratory hygiene. Ensure wide and easy availability of alcohol-based hand sanitizer products.
- Educate your employees about your pandemic plans and cross-train back-up personnel for essential job duties. Encourage employee feedback and decision making. In emergencies, employees demonstrate an increased tendency to listen to their employer, so clear and frequent communication is essential.
- Plan to pass decision-making duties and other essential functions to secondary staff. Be prepared to shift your operational headquarters to a regional or subordinate office in a geographic location less affected by the pandemic.
- Plan for how you will lead your business back to normal when the pandemic subsides. Prepare for a permanent loss of some personnel due to deaths or other circumstances.

Protecting Employee's Health

After identifying the core people and skills required to keep the essential parts of your business operating, a pandemic business plan should outlines ways to minimize illness among staff and visitors. The main strategies for workplace wellness include:

- Avoid close contact with people who are sick. If you are sick, keep your distance from others to protect them from getting sick, too.
- Stay home when you're sick or have flu symptoms. Get plenty of rest and check with a health care provider as needed.
- Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when coughing or sneezing. It may prevent those around you from getting sick.
- Clean your hands. Washing your hands often will help protect you against germs. When soap and water are not available, use alcohol-based disposable hand wipes or gel sanitizers.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth. Germs are often spread when a person touches something that is contaminated with germs and then touches his or her eyes, nose or mouth.
- Practice other good health habits. Get plenty of sleep, be physically active, manage stress, drink plenty of fluids, eat nutritious foods, and avoid smoking, which may increase the risk of serious consequences if you do contract the flu.

Seasonal Flu vs. Pandemic Flu: What's the Difference?

Seasonal Flu

- Seasonal flu is caused by influenza viruses that are similar to those already affecting people. Flu shots are available every year to protect against seasonal flu.
- Symptoms include fever, cough, sore throat, headache and muscle pain.
- Healthy adults are usually not at risk for serious complications. The very young, the elderly and people with serious health conditions are at increased risk for serious complications, such as pneumonia or even death.
- The more common flu that spreads each winter generally causes a modest impact on society, for example, some schools are closed and sick people are encouraged to stay home.

Pandemic Flu

- Pandemic flu is caused by a new influenza virus that people have not been exposed to before. Flu shots might not be available during the beginning of the pandemic because large amounts of vaccine cannot be made until experts know what the new virus looks like.
- Symptoms will be similar to the regular flu, but may be more severe and complications could be more serious.
- Healthy adults may face a higher risk for serious complications.
- A severe pandemic could change daily life for some time. People may choose to stay home or be forced to stay home if they are sick or need to care for others. Travel and public gatherings could be limited. Basic services and access to supplies could be disrupted.

What is Bird Flu?

Just like people, birds can get sick from flu viruses, but bird flu viruses rarely infect people. The bird flu that has been spreading quickly among wild birds and poultry in many countries is a very serious type of bird flu called H5N1. Currently, the H5N1 bird flu does not spread easily from person-to-person. Most of the human infections with bird flu in other parts of the world were caused by very close contact with infected birds. In the United States, poultry farms are very careful to prevent disease. Health experts are concerned that H5N1 could change into a virus that easily spreads from person-to-person. Scientists around the word are watching for changes in bird flu viruses because that could signal the beginning of a pandemic.



Preparing for a Pandemic:

What Parents Need to Know About Seasonal and Pandemic Flu



A Message from the Health Officer

An influenza, or flu, pandemic happens when a new flu virus appears that easily spreads from person-to-person and around the world. A pandemic flu would spread rapidly, and would affect all age groups. It would cause illness in a high proportion of those infected. The World Health Organization warns that a flu pandemic could infect between 25 and 30 percent of the world's population – three million people in the state of Michigan alone.

So what do you, as a parent, need to know about pandemic flu? It's important to know both the magnitude of how a pandemic outbreak may affect your day-to-day routine, and what actions you can take to help lessen the impact of an influenza pandemic on you and your family. Because a pandemic will happen almost everywhere at nearly the same time, few communities will have resources to spare. That's why it's so important for you to prepare your family for a pandemic event.

This guide will provide you with information about seasonal and pandemic flu, how to stop the spread of illness, and how to plan for a possible pandemic. By educating yourself and planning ahead, you can reduce the effects of a pandemic on your family...and our community.

Dale R. Hein, M.A., MSW

Male R. Kein

Director/Health Officer

Kalamazoo County Health & Community Services

SEASONAL FLU VS. PANDEMIC FLU:

What's the Difference?

	Seasonal Flu	Pandemic Flu	
Description	Seasonal flu is caused by influenza viruses that are similar to those already affecting people. Flu shots are available every year to protect against seasonal flu.	Pandemic flu is caused by a new influenza virus that people have not been exposed to before. Flu shots might not be available during the beginning of the pandemic because large amounts of vaccine cannot be made until experts know what the virus looks like.	
Symptoms	Symptoms include fever, cough, sore throat, headache, and muscle pain.	Symptoms will be similar to the regular flu, but may be more severe and complications could be more serious.	
	Healthy adults are usually not at risk for serious complications. The very young, the elderly, and people with serious health conditions are at increased risk for serious complications, such as pneumonia or even death. The more common flu that spreads each winter generally causes a modest impact on society, for example, some schools are closed and sick people are encouraged to stay home.	Healthy adults may face a higher risk for serious complications. It is not possible to prevent or stop a pandemic flu once it begins spreading. Infected people can spread the disease from one day prior to the onset of symptoms to about five days after onset. This makes it extremely easy for the virus to spread rapidly. A severe pandemic could change daily life for some time. People may choose to stay home or be forced to stay home if they are sick or need to care for others. Travel and public gatherings could be limited. Basic services and access to supplies could be disrupted.	

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BE A FLU FIGHTER!

A pandemic strain of the flu is spread just like seasonal flu – through droplets from coughs and sneezes. You can take common-sense steps now to limit the spread of flu. Here's how:

- Teach your children to wash their hands with lots of soap and water for at least 20 seconds. Be sure to set a good example by doing this yourself.
- Teach your children to cover coughs and sneezes with tissues, or by coughing into the inside of the elbow. Again, be sure to set a good example by doing this yourself.
- Keep children who are sick at home. Don't send them to school, and keep them away from others until they are better.
- Keep all childhood vaccinations up-to-date, and make sure everyone in your household gets a flu shot each year. While the vaccine available for the ordinary flu will not protect you from a pandemic influenza virus, it will protect you from getting seasonal flu, which could weaken your immune system and your resistance to a pandemic influenza.
- If you smoke quit. Smokers are more likely to get seasonal flu, and children exposed to secondhand smoke are more likely to have weakened immune systems and greater susceptibility to illness.



SLOWING THE SPREAD OF A PANDEMIC

It is not possible to prevent or stop a pandemic flu once it begins to spread. Infected people can spread the disease from one day prior to the onset of symptoms, to about five days after onset. This makes it extremely easy for the virus to spread rapidly. During a pandemic event, people may be asked or required to do things to help decrease the spread of the disease. Some examples:

STAY HOME

People who are sick should stay home. Children should not go to school if they are sick. Staying home will be especially important during a pandemic to limit the spread of the disease.

AVOID LARGE GROUPS



Isolation and Quarantine are public health actions that are used to contain the spread of a contagious disease. If asked, it will be important for you to follow Isolation and/or Quarantine instructions.

ISOLATION

Isolation is for people who are already ill. When someone is isolated, they are separated from people who are healthy. Having the sick person isolated (separated from others) can help slow or stop the spread of the disease. People who are isolated can be cared for in their homes, in hospitals, or other healthcare facilities. Isolation is usually voluntary, but local, state and federal governments have the power to require the isolation of sick people to protect the public.

QUARANTINE

Quarantine is for people who have been exposed to the disease but who are not sick. When someone is placed in quarantine, they are also separated from others. Even though the person is not sick at the moment, they were exposed to the disease and may still become infectious and then spread the disease to others. Quarantine can help to slow or stop this from happening. States generally have the power to enforce quarantines within their borders.



PLANNING FOR A PANDEMIC

As you and your family plan for a flu pandemic, think about the challenges you might face. The services you depend on may be disrupted. Here are some things to consider:

- Plan for the possibility that usual services may be disrupted.
 These could include hospitals, clinics, banks, restaurants, government offices and post offices, and telephone and cell phone companies.
- Gatherings, such as volunteer meetings and worship services, may be canceled. Prepare contact lists including conference calls, telephone chains, and email lists.
- Consider that the ability to travel, even by car if there are fuel shortages, may be limited.
- Talk to your family about where family members will go in an emergency and how they will receive care in case you can't communicate with them.
- Widespread illness could result in the closing of ATMs and banks. Keep a small amount of cash or traveler's checks in small denominations for easy use.



PLANNING FOR SCHOOL CLOSINGS

Your child's school or childcare facility may be closed to limit the spread of pandemic flu. School closings may be a public health tool for containing disease early in a pandemic, and could occur on short notice. Take steps now to prepare for an extended home stay.

- Talk to teachers, administrators, and parent-teacher organizations about your school's pandemic plan, and offer to help with planning efforts.
- Plan now in case children must stay at home for extended periods.
 School closings may accompany restrictions on public gatherings, including malls and movie theaters.



- Plan activities your children can do at home. Have learning materials, such as books, school supplies, and educational computer activities and movies on hand.
- Talk to teachers, administrators, and parent-teacher organizations about possible activities, lesson plans and exercises that children can do at home if schools are closed.
- Store a supply of water and food. During a pandemic you may not be able to get to a store – or stores may be out of supplies – so it will be important for you to have extra supplies on hand.
- Maintain a two-week supply of nonperishable food that doesn't need refrigeration, preparation (including the use of water), or cooking. Include formula if you have an infant, and any other special nutritional needs.
- Store two weeks of water, one gallon of water per person per day (two quarts for drinking, two quarts for food preparation/sanitation), in plastic containers. Avoid containers that decompose or break, such as milk cartons or glass bottles.
- Have an extra supply of prescription drugs on hand for all family members. Make sure you also have a supply of nonprescription drugs and other health supplies, including pain relievers, stomach remedies, cough and cold medicines, fluids with electrolytes, and vitamins.



Is it the Flu?

The symptoms of in	tluenza are:
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	Fever - low (99 F) to high (104 F), usually for three
	days, but may persist for four to eight days. Some
	times fever will go away and return a day later.
	Aching muscles
	Cough
	Headache
	Joint aches
	Eye pain
П	Feeling very cold or having shaking chills
	Feeling very tired
	Sore throat
	Runny or stuffy nose

IF YOUR CHILD DEVELOPS THESE SYMPTOMS...

- Keep them home from school!
- Encourage them to rest and drink plenty of fluids.
- Give fever reducers (acetaminophen or ibuprofen). Do not use aspirin in children or teenagers as it can cause Reye's syndrome, a life-threatening illness.
- Contact your healthcare provider for further advice.

When your child stays home sick, it is important to report the illness as accurately as possible to the school office. Kalamazoo County Health & Community Services monitors school illness reports to watch for trends. During a flu pandemic, keeping track of these numbers will help health officials determine when and whether to close schools, whether the outbreak is increasing in scope, and whether to declare an epidemic.

More Information

For more information on pandemic flu, visit the following websites or call the telephone numbers provided.

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

www.pandemicflu.gov

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

www.cdc.gov 1.800-CDC-INFO (1-800-232-4636) inquiry@cdc.gov

Michigan Department of Community Health

www.michigan.gov/prepare

Kalamazoo County Health and Community Services

www.kalcounty.com/hcs

Main Switchboard: 269-373-5200 Emergency Hotline: 269-373-5300

The Kalamazoo County Health and Community Services Department has experts on staff who can answer your questions about pandemic flu and help you with your planning efforts. For more information, contact one of the individuals below.

Linda Vail Buzas

Assistant Director

Phone: 269-373-5160

Email: lvbuza@kalcounty.com

Bob Hale

Emergency Preparedness Coordinator

Phone: 269-373-5061

Email: rahale@kalcounty.com

Erin Campbell

Public Information Officer

Phone: 269-373-5226

Email: ekcamp@kalcounty.com

For additional copies of this publication, call 269-373-5226 or send an email to: pio@kalcounty.com.



Location: 3299 Gull Road

Kalamazoo, MI 49048

Mailing Address: PO Box 42

Nazareth, MI 49074-0042

Phone: 269-373-5200 **Fax:** 269-373-5363

Web: www.kalcounty.com/hcs

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PANDEMIC INFLUENZA:
What You Can Do to Prepare
and Protect Yourself

An influenza, or flu, pandemic happens when a new flu virus appears that spreads easily from person-to-person and around the world. While we cannot predict if and when a pandemic might happen – or what its impact might be – there are things we can all do to prepare.

Although in some ways pandemic flu would be unlike other disasters or emergencies we've faced, what you can do to prepare is similar to how you plan for other emergencies and natural disasters. However, because a pandemic will happen almost everywhere at nearly the same time, few communities will have resources to spare. That's why it's so important to learn more about this unique public health threat, take steps to prepare, and adopt good health habits that will help you protect yourself.



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What's the Difference

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home.

or need to care for others. Travel

and public gatherings could be limited. Basic services and access to supplies could be disrupted.

PREPARE - THREE STEPS TO TAKE NOW!



Talk with Family Members

Think about health issues that could affect you and your family during a pandemic. Consider what you will need to care for loved ones in your home for an extended period of time.



Store Food and Water

Store at least a two-week supply of drinking water and non-perishable food. Include food that doesn't need refrigeration, preparation (including the use of water), or cooking. Plan on one gallon of water per person per day stored in plastic containers.



Create a Medical Supply Kit

Have an extra supply of prescription drugs on hand for all family members. Make sure you also have a supply of nonprescription drugs and other health supplies, including pain relievers, stomach remedies, cough and cold medicines, vitamins, and first aid materials.



PROTECT YOURSELF!

A pandemic strain of the flu is spread just like seasonal flu – through droplets from coughs and sneezes. In fact, one case of influenza can spread to several people, even to healthy adults. You can take common-sense steps now to limit the spread of the flu. Follow these three simple rules:

- 1 Stay home when you're sick.
- 2 Cover your coughs with a tissue or your elbow.
- 3 Wash your hands or use alcohol-based sanitizer.

Who Should Get a Flu Shot?

Flu season starts in the winter months and continues through spring. It is recommended that everyone get the influenza vaccine, however certain people are at risk for developing severe illness or complications from influenza and are strongly encouraged to get the influenza vaccine every year. These groups include the following:

- Person two years and older with chronic health conditions (e.g. heart and lung disease, asthma, diabetes, etc)
- Residents of long-term care facilities
- Persons over 50 years old, especially those over age 65
- Children age 6-23 months
- Pregnant women
- Health-care personnel who provide direct patient care
- Household contacts and out-of-home caregivers of

LEARN MORE!

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U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

www.pandemicflu.gov

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention www.cdc.gov

Michigan Department of Community Health www.michigan.gov/prepare

Kalamazoo County Health and Community Services

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FAMILY EMERGENCY HEALTH PLAN



Fill in information for each family member in the space provided, or create your own chart with family health information. (This information sheet can also be used for other emergencies.)

Family Member	Allergies	Medications/Dosages	Special Medical Conditions
MERGENCY CONTAC	CTS		
l personal emergency contact:		Health insurance company:	
of-town personal emergency contact:		Member/subscriber/and group numbers:	
ly physician(s):		Employer emergency contact information:	-
nacy:		School emergency contact information:	
The state of the s			