



# PANDEMIC PREPAREDNESS

## CHILD CARE FACILITIES

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, children are two to three times more likely than adults to get sick with seasonal flu and frequently spread the virus to others. In the event of an influenza pandemic, you can help protect the health of your staff and the children and families you serve. Interruptions in child care services during a pandemic may cause conflicts for working parents and result in high absenteeism in workplaces; absenteeism which may be a problem to the emergency response system. The following guidelines are helpful in the prevention of many illnesses.

- Teach children to wash hands frequently with soap and water and model the correct behavior.
- Teach children to cover coughs and sneezes with tissues or elbows, and be sure to model that behavior.
- Teach children to stay away from others as much as possible if they are sick.
- Disinfect toys and surfaces regularly.
- Stay home if you are sick.

Although there currently is not an influenza pandemic, it is a good idea to have a plan for your facility. The federal government has provided planning documents and advice for many sectors of our society. One of the items recommended for child care facilities is encouraging parents to have a “Plan B” for finding care for their children if your program is closed. Give them ideas about where they might seek help based on your knowledge of the local child care community.

For more information, visit <http://www.ohiopandemicflu.gov/schools/schools.htm>.

## SCHOOLS

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, children are two to three times more likely than adults to get sick with seasonal flu and frequently spread the virus to others. In the event of an influenza pandemic, you can help protect the health of your staff and the children and families you serve. School closures during a pandemic may cause conflicts for working parents and result in high absenteeism in workplaces; absenteeism which may be a problem to the emergency response system. The following guidelines are helpful in the prevention of many illnesses.

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- Teach children to cover coughs and sneezes with tissues or elbows and be sure to model that behavior.
- Teach children to stay away from others as much as possible if they are sick.
- Stay home if you are sick.

Although there currently is not an influenza pandemic, it is a good idea to have a plan for your facility. The federal government has provided planning documents and advice for many sectors of our society. For more information, visit <http://www.ohiopandemicflu.gov/schools/schools.htm>.

## **PARENTS AND CARETAKERS OF CHILDREN**

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, children are two to three times more likely than adults to get sick with seasonal flu and frequently spread the virus to others. In the event of an influenza pandemic, you can help protect the health of your children and family as home care may be the main source of care for most people infected with influenza.

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- Teach children to cover coughs and sneezes with tissues or elbows and be sure to model that behavior.
- Teach children to stay away from others as much as possible if they are sick.

Stay home if you are sick and maintain distance from healthy household members.

## **ANTIVIRALS AND PREGNANCY, BREASTFEEDING**

For pregnant or breastfeeding women or women planning to get pregnant, zanamavir (Relenza™) may be the preferred antiviral drug because it is inhaled and does not circulate throughout the body. This means it may be less likely to affect the unborn baby. Recommendations on taking antiviral drugs during a pandemic may change as more information is learned about the virus causing the pandemic. Consult your doctor for the most current information on antiviral medications. (source: <http://www.bchealthguide.org/healthfiles/hfile94e.stm>)

## **CHURCH AND SOCIAL ORGANIZATIONS, CHARITABLE ORGANIZATIONS**

When it occurs, an influenza pandemic will disrupt our everyday lives. As a charitable organization, your services will likely be utilized by more people; while volunteers could be home sick or caring for sick family members.

Although there is no influenza pandemic at this time, it is a good idea to have a plan for your programs. The federal government has provided planning documents and advice for many sectors of our society. For more information visit <http://www.ohiopandemicflu.gov/communities/communities.htm>.

## **CORRECTIONS FACILITIES/NURSING HOMES**

When it occurs, an influenza pandemic will disrupt our everyday lives. Take precautions to keep yourself and those in your care safe by reducing the spread of germs. Influenza is spread by coughs and sneezes and the virus can be picked up on hands and transferred.

Encourage everyone to use soap and water to wash hands; or alcohol-based hand-sanitizers if soap and water are unavailable. Regularly check restrooms to ensure soap and paper towels are available. Encourage employees to stay home if they are sick to reduce the spread of illness. Surfaces everyone touches such as doorknobs, handrails, drinking fountains, chairs in common areas and common telephones should be regularly cleaned.

## **MEDICAL PERSONNEL**

In a study conducted by the Harvard School of Public Health, 84 percent of Americans said they would talk to their physician if a human case of avian flu was reported in their state. Unfortunately, 68 percent also said they would try to get a prescription for an antiviral medication. Knowing that an influenza pandemic could begin months before an effective vaccine is available and that current vaccine stockpiles may be insufficient, medical professionals play a critical role in preventing the spread of a potential influenza pandemic. As trusted advisers, you will be relied upon for guidance and expert

advice. Luckily, much of this advice will be reinforcement of common-sense preventive behaviors that each individual can take to delay or prevent the onset of illness.

## **HOME HEALTH CARE**

During a pandemic, most patients with influenza may be able to remain at home during the course of their illness and can be cared for by family members or others in their household. Anyone living with an influenza patient during the incubation period and illness is at risk for developing influenza, but there are steps you can take to limit transmission within and outside the home.

Basic infection-control precautions should be emphasized including isolating the sick patient and using proper hygiene. Designate a primary caregiver, ideally someone who does not have an underlying condition that places them at increased risk of severe influenza disease. Although no studies have assessed the use of masks at home to decrease the spread of infection, use of surgical or procedure masks by the patient and/or caregiver during interactions may be of benefit.

Although there is no influenza pandemic at this time, it is a good idea to have a plan. The federal government has provided planning documents and advice for many sectors of our society. For more information, visit <http://www.ohiopandemicflu.gov/providers/providers.htm>.

## **CRITICAL SERVICES**

When it occurs, an influenza pandemic will disrupt our everyday lives, but our infrastructure will need to continue during a pandemic. A few critical service areas have been identified as:

- Vaccine and antiviral manufacturers.
- Medical and public health workers.
- Public safety workers including police, fire, 911 dispatchers and correctional facility staff.
- Utility workers essential for maintenance of power, water and sewage systems.
- Transportation workers transporting fuel, water, food and medical supplies as well as public ground public transportation.

As critical responders, your services will likely be in great demand. Until vaccines are available, a substantial percentage of your workforce could be home sick or caring for family members. It is important to remain home when you are sick to keep yourself and others safe.

Being prepared personally can also help critical responders continue to function on the job. The federal government has provided planning documents and advice for many individuals. For more information, visit <http://www.ohiopandemicflu.gov/families/families.htm>.

## **SOCIAL & WORKPLACE INTERACTIONS**

When it occurs, an influenza pandemic will disrupt our everyday lives. Proper hygiene can reduce the risk of spreading germs during your work day.

Encourage employees to use alcohol-based hand sanitizers at their desks. Regularly check restrooms to ensure soap and paper towels are available. Encourage employees to stay home if they are sick to reduce the spread of illness. Surfaces every employee touches such as doorknobs, handrails, drinking fountains and common telephones should be regularly cleaned.

Influenza is spread by coughs and sneezes and the virus can be picked up on hands and transferred. Consider greater distance between people at meetings and alternative greetings to a handshake. To prevent the spread of germs, the World Health Organization recommends the “elbow bump” instead of handshakes.

Although there is no influenza pandemic at this time, it is a good idea to have a plan for your business. The federal government has provided planning documents and advice for many sectors of our society. For more information, visit <http://www.ohiopandemicflu.gov/businesses/businesses.htm>.

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**FOR MORE INFORMATION CONTACT:**

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