



**Disability Development Resources, L.L.C.**

# **Pandemic Influenza Exposure Control Plan**

**This plan was developed based on currently available information from the Arizona State Department of Health Services, the Maricopa County Department of Public Health, the National Safety Council, the Occupational Health and Safety Administration (OSHA), the United States Center for Disease Control (CDC), the United States Department of Health and Human Services, and the United Nations World Health Organization (WHO).**

**BACKGROUND:**

Influenza is a highly infectious viral illness that causes yearly seasonal epidemics reported since at least the early 1500's. In the U.S., complications of influenza cause an average of 36,000 deaths each year, primarily among the elderly. The influenza virus is transmitted indirectly in most cases by airborne droplets expelled from infected persons by coughing and sneezing, but it can be transmitted by direct contact. Typical symptoms include abrupt onset of fever (101°F to 102°F), headache, chills, fatigue, muscular pain or tenderness, sore throat, and nonproductive cough, and may include runny or stuffy nose. An annual influenza vaccination is the best method of protection against influenza. Other measures, such as frequent hand washing, staying home when sick, and the institution of public health measures for universal respiratory hygiene and cough etiquette, will help stop the spread of influenza.

Influenza viruses are unique in their ability to adapt to their environment and to cause sudden infection in all age groups on a global scale. A pandemic or global epidemic occurs when there is a major change in the influenza virus so that most or all of the world's population has never been exposed previously and is thus vulnerable to the virus. Three pandemics have already taken place during the 20<sup>th</sup> century. The Spanish Flu, in 1918 which caused over 500,000 U.S. deaths and more than 20 million deaths worldwide, the Asian flu of 1957-58 and the Hong flu of 1968-69 both of which also caused widespread illness and death. Recent outbreaks of human disease caused by avian influenza strains in Asia and Europe have highlighted the potential for new influenza strains to be introduced into the population.

An influenza pandemic has a greater potential to cause rapid increases in illness and death than virtually any other natural health threat. The impact of the next pandemic could have a devastating effect on the health and well-being of the American public. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) estimates that, in the United States alone, up to 200 million people will be infected, 50 million people will require outpatient care; two million people will be hospitalized, and between 100,000 and 500,000 persons will die. Using software provided by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), it was estimated that in Iowa, there would be approximately 165,000 outpatient visits, 4,000 hospital admissions, and 900 deaths during an influenza pandemic. Locally in the Iowa service catchment area of approximately 36,000 people, it is estimated that in a predicted 8-week pandemic period, to have 9,220 people infected with 4,500 outpatient visits resulting in 126 admissions and 30+ deaths. This will increase hospital capacity by 28% at peak time, ICU capacity by 105%, and ventilator capacity by 132%. According to the United State Consensus Bureau as of 2004 Iowa has an estimated population of 2,966,334 and Arizona 5,939,292 so the estimated effect on Arizona would be much higher.

Effective preventive and therapeutic measures including vaccines and antiviral agents will likely be in short supply, as well as antibiotics to treat secondary infections. Health-care workers and other first responders will likely be at even higher risk of exposure and illness than the general population, further impeding the care of victims. Widespread illness in the community will also increase the likelihood of sudden and potentially significant shortages of personnel who provide other essential community services.

**PURPOSE:**

The purpose of this guide is to assist in managing the impact of an influenza pandemic on employees and business based on two main strategies:

- Reducing spread of the virus within business operations; and
- Sustaining essential services

The DDR Pandemic Influenza Exposure Control Plan is intended to be used in conjunction with the DDR Bloodborne Pathogens Exposure Control Plan to reduce the risk of infection to employees.

**RESPONSIBILITY:**

Employees are expected to follow policies and procedures of their particular place of work. When new procedures or duties will be performed by an employee previously determined not to be at risk for potential exposure, it is DDR's responsibility to inform the employee that the employee will be subject to the requirements of the standard.

DDR Director Deborah Lamoree has overall responsibility for the program.

A copy of the plan may be obtained from [www.ddresources.com](http://www.ddresources.com) or is available by contacting DDR.

The DDR Director informed must ensure the required employee training is completed prior to the at-risk employee starting work.

### **REDUCING THE SPREAD OF THE VIRUS IN THE WORKPLACE:**

In an effort to reduce the risk of infected persons entering the work/business site, upon notification that a pandemic is taking place, a DDR Director should do the following:

- Educate employees on how to stop the spread of the virus by disseminating a copy of the Pandemic Influenza Exposure Control Plan and any fact sheets that have been developed. Placing notices on the DDR website, notices should contain information regarding hand hygiene, covering coughs and sneezes, and social distancing.
- Ensure adequate supplies of particulate respirators, gloves, hand sanitizing gels, and cleaning supplies are available for employees.
- Consumers should be notified that all shared work areas in their homes such as desktops, tables, door knobs, stair rails, telephones etc. should be cleaned as often as possible.

### **HAND HYGIENE:**

Proper hand hygiene is the most effective way to prevent the spread of infection. To properly wash and clean hands, the following procedure should be followed:

- Wash hands when they are visibly dirty or soiled with blood or other body fluids. Wash hands with either a non-antimicrobial soap or an antimicrobial soap and water. When washing hands with soap and water, wet hands first with water, apply to hands the amount of product recommended by the manufacturer, and rub hands together vigorously for at least 15 seconds, covering all surfaces of the hands and fingers. Rinse hands with water and dry thoroughly with a disposable towel. Use towel to turn off the faucet.
- If hands are not visibly soiled, an alcohol-based hand rub or gel may be used in place of soap and water. When using an alcohol-based hand rub or gel, apply product to the palm of one hand and rub hands together, covering all surfaces of hands and fingers, until the hands are dry.
- Avoid wearing artificial fingernails when caring for patients at high risk for infection, and keep natural nail tips less than 1/4-inch long.
- Wear gloves when contact with blood or other potentially infectious materials, mucous membranes, and non-intact skin could occur.
- Remove gloves after caring for a patient. Always perform hand hygiene after removing gloves. Do not wear the same pair of gloves for the care of more than one patient, and do not wash gloves between uses with different patients.
- Change gloves during patient care if moving from a contaminated body site to a clean body site.

DDR provides unlimited gloves and waterless hand sanitizer to all employees at no cost.

### **UNIVERSAL PRECAUTIONS:**

DDR employees are bound by OSHA's Bloodborne Pathogens Standard and must wear universal precautions when handling any and all bodily fluids.

DDR is monitoring confirmed cases of avian influenza via the information provided by the CDC and will make disposable N95 particulate respirators available at no cost to all employees in the event of confirmed human cases of avian influenza in the US. Employees will be required to undergo fit testing to ensure the devices are properly utilized.

### **WORKPLACE CLEANING:**

Consumers should be alerted that their homes should be cleaned as often and as thoroughly as possible to prevent viability of the virus.

- Shared work areas, counters, railings, door knobs and stair wells should be cleaned more frequently during the influenza pandemic.
- Filters of the air conditioning systems should be cleaned and changed frequently.
- Telephones should not be shared.
- Specialized cleaning solutions are not essential. Standard cleaning products are adequate (including soap and water); most important is the frequency of cleaning.

## **EDUCATING EMPLOYEES TO REDUCE RISK:**

It is likely there will be anxiety regarding the pandemic influenza and this may contribute to increased absenteeism and/or increased distress to staff. To help alleviate concern:

- Employees will be educated about DDR's preparedness efforts and granted permanent access to the Pandemic Influenza Exposure Control Plan and all developed fact sheets via the DDR website and newsletter.
- As more information becomes available, DDR will provide timely updates via the DDR website and newsletter. All employees will be alerted to the updates.
- During the pandemic, DDR will continue to educate employees on the progress of the pandemic, its effects, available medications, and vaccination availability and locations.

## **MANAGING ILLNESS IN EMPLOYEES:**

- If employees begin to display symptoms or become ill at work they should distance themselves from their consumer immediately and call a director for a replacement. The alerted director will immediately find a replacement for the infected employee and relieve them of their duties.
- If an employee is observed to be ill or observes that another person is exhibiting symptoms of influenza at work, a director must be notified immediately. The director will ensure the ill person leaves the work place as soon as possible.
- The director will encourage the employee to seek medical care and report back if influenza is likely.

## **SOCIAL DISTANCING:**

Social distancing refers to strategies to reduce the spread of the virus between people; for example, postponing conferences, conducting meetings over the phone, or working from home. DDR employees are encouraged to practice social distancing when appropriate both inside and outside of the workplace.

Social distancing strategies may include:

- Avoid meeting people face to face; employees are encouraged to use the telephone, video conferencing and the Internet to conduct business as much as possible even when participants are in the same building.
- Employees should avoid any unnecessary travel; all meetings and trainings not involving direct support services with consumers will be canceled, postponed or held via telephone, video conferencing, or the Internet.
- All DDR employees have the option of working from home with a satisfactory home certification. Please consult your DSP Resource Manual for more information or contact us directly to get your home certified.
- If public transportation is used, ensure good ventilation within the vehicle, wash hands often, and ensure that everyone covers coughs and sneezes.
- Bring your own food for meals and eat away from others (avoid crowded eating areas).
- Minimize face-to-face interactions.
- If face-to-face meetings are unavoidable, DDR will minimize the meeting time.
- Employees are encouraged to avoid shaking hands or hugging.
- Employees are strongly encouraged to practice social distancing outside of the workplace.

## **STAY HOME:**

All employees are encouraged to abstain from work if they are exhibiting symptoms or become ill.

## **REDUCING THE SPREAD OF THE VIRUS OUTSIDE OF THE WORKPLACE:**

### **TRAVEL RELATED ISSUES:**

It is extremely important for employees to be mindful when traveling to prevent the spread of the virus and should follow the appropriate precautions for each stage of travel.

Before traveling to an infected area all employees should follow the following guidelines from the CDC and WHO:

- Be sure you are up to date with all your routine vaccinations, and see your doctor or health-care provider, ideally 4-6 weeks before travel, to get any additional vaccination medications or information you may need.
- Assemble a travel health kit containing basic first aid and medical supplies. Be sure to include a thermometer and alcohol-based hand gel for hand hygiene.
- Identify in-country health-care resources in advance of your trip.

- Check your health insurance plan or get additional insurance that covers medical evacuation in case you become sick.
- Visit CDC's Travelers' Health website at <http://www.cdc.gov/travel> to educate yourself and others who may be traveling with you about any disease risks and CDC health recommendations for international travel in areas you plan to visit.

During travel to an affected area employees can protect themselves with the following guidelines from the CDC and WHO:

- Avoid all direct contact with poultry, including touching well-appearing, sick, or dead chickens and ducks. Avoid places such as poultry farms and bird markets where live poultry are raised or kept, and avoid handling surfaces contaminated with poultry feces or secretions.
- As with other infectious illnesses, one of the most important preventive practices is careful and frequent hand washing. Cleaning your hands often with soap and water removes potentially infectious material from your skin and helps prevent disease transmission. Waterless alcohol-based hand gels may be used when soap is not available and hands are not visibly soiled.
- All foods from poultry, including eggs and poultry blood should be cooked thoroughly. Egg yolks should not be runny or liquid. Because influenza viruses are destroyed by heat, the cooking temperature for poultry meat should be 74°C (165°F).
- If you become sick with symptoms such as a fever accompanied by a cough, sore throat, or difficulty breathing, or if you develop any illness that requires prompt medical attention, a U.S. consular officer can assist you in locating medical services and informing your family or friends. Inform your health-care provider of any possible exposures to avian influenza.

Note: Some countries have instituted health monitoring techniques, such as temperature screenings, at ports of entry of travelers arriving from areas affected by avian influenza. Please consult the Embassy of your travel destination country if you have any questions.

After travel employees can protect themselves with the following guidelines from the CDC and WHO:

- Monitor your health for 10 days.
- If you become ill with a fever plus a cough, sore throat, or trouble breathing during this 10-day period, consult a health-care provider. ***Before you visit a health-care setting, tell the provider the following: 1) your symptoms, 2) where you traveled, and 3) if you have had direct contact with poultry or close contact with a severely ill person. This way, he or she can be aware that you have traveled to an area reporting avian influenza.***
- Do not travel while ill, unless you are seeking medical care. Limiting contact with others as much as possible can help prevent the spread of an infectious illness.

#### **INFLUENZA VACCINE:**

Public health officials will make the best use of available vaccine and will inform businesses and the public on how the vaccine will be used appropriately. It may take six months or more to manufacture the vaccine from the beginning of the pandemic.

- Employees are encouraged to obtain the annual seasonal influenza vaccines.
- The Arizona Department of Public Health and the Center for Disease Control will provide advice on priority groups for pandemic influenza immunization.

#### **ANTI-VIRAL MEDICATION:**

Antiviral medications may play an integral role in the treatment and prevention of pandemic influenza; however, the certainty of their efficacy against a pandemic strain of influenza is currently unknown. Unlike the influenza vaccine, certain antiviral medications are already available, though there may be barriers in attempting to use them as a treatment and prevention tool in the event of pandemic influenza.

- The Arizona Department of Public Health will provide recommendations of the use of anti-viral medication.
- A director should check the Arizona Department of Public Health's website for the latest information on the use of anti-viral medications and recommendations.