

RELATED TERMS

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LESSON LEARNED

Pandemic Influenza Preparedness: Conducting Workshops for Elected and Appointed Officials

SUMMARY

Regional pandemic planners should consider hosting workshops to provide education to elected and appointed officials about pandemic preparedness efforts. Senior officials should be encouraged to attend in person and not to send staff members in their place.

DESCRIPTION

The Louisiana Department of Health and Hospitals/Office of Public Health sponsored a series of pandemic influenza tabletop exercises (TTX) throughout the state from December 2006 to February 2007. On January 31, 2007, the Louisiana Office of Public Health (OPH) Region VI conducted a TTX in Alexandria, LA.

TTX participants represented 5 state organizations and 37 regional and local organizations. The goal of the TTX was to engage community partners in a discussion of Emergency Support Function (ESF)-8 (public health and emergency medical) roles and responsibilities, expectations, and anticipated challenges in the face of an influenza pandemic. One TTX objective was to assess the familiarity of pandemic influenza planning among internal (ESF-8) and external stakeholders. The TTX scenario consisted of a severe influenza pandemic emerging in OPH Region VI.

Region VI

Louisiana's Office of Public Health Region VI is located in Alexandria, Louisiana, and includes the parishes of Avoyelles, Catahoula, Concordia, Grant, LaSalle, Rapides, Vernon, and Winn.

No elected officials attended the TTX despite the invitations sent out by OPH Region VI. This Region is not alone in trying to overcome the lack of participation by elected leadership. The TTX after-action report (AAR) noted that "a continued effort to bring these partners to the planning table must be maintained despite the apparent lack of interest." The AAR recommended that OPH continue its aggressive outreach effort to help educate elected officials about their roles and responsibilities in preparing their jurisdictions for a pandemic influenza outbreak. A workshop specifically for elected officials could be employed to bring together all the necessary individuals at a single day and time. The workshop can also inform elected and appointed officials about the demands that the public is likely to place upon them during a pandemic influenza outbreak.

Regional pandemic planners should consider hosting workshops to provide education to elected and appointed officials about pandemic preparedness efforts. Senior officials should be encouraged to attend in person and not to send staff members in their place.

CITATION

Louisiana Office of Public Health, Louisiana Department of Health and Hospitals.
Pandemic Influenza External Tabletop Exercise Program After-Action Reports. 26
Feb 2007.

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