



FEMA

LESSON LEARNED

Pandemic Influenza Preparedness: Alternate Care Site Roles and Responsibilities

SUMMARY

State public health departments should engage hospital and mass care partners to clarify roles and responsibilities for establishing and operating alternate care sites during a pandemic influenza outbreak.

DESCRIPTION

The Louisiana Department of Health and Hospitals (DHH)/Office of Public Health (OPH) sponsored a series of pandemic influenza tabletop exercises (TTX) throughout the state from December 2006 to February 2007. On December 5, 2006, the OPH Center for Community Preparedness conducted a TTX in Lake Charles, LA. TTX participants represented 5 state organizations, and 20 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 risk communications 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 V.

Region V

Louisiana's Office of Public Health Region V is located in Lake Charles, Louisiana, and includes the parishes of Allen, Beauregard, Calcasieu, Cameron, and Jefferson Davis.

TTX participants discussed planning for employing alternate care sites. Neither the public health nor the healthcare participants possessed clear guidance regarding the responsibility for establishing and operating the care sites. Participants from healthcare institutions focused on patient distribution and tracking, medical surge, and resource allocation issues. Hospital participants were unwilling to provide or support alternate care sites; they expected public health agencies to undertake these activities. OPH Region V participants believed that healthcare entities should be responsible for alternate care sites since the sites would be established to alleviate surge issues at hospitals. The TTX after-action report (AAR) recommended that state agencies and healthcare stakeholders clarify alternate care site roles and responsibilities.

State public health departments should engage hospital and mass care partners to clarify roles and responsibilities for establishing and operating alternate care sites during a pandemic influenza outbreak. The TTX AAR recommended the establishment of a state planning committee that includes representatives of ESF-8 and ESF-6 (Mass Care) since the issue falls within the jurisdiction of each.

CITATION

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

<https://www.llis.dhs.gov/docdetails/details.do?contentID=26393>

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