



Pandemic Flu

Community Planning Guide

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Various municipalities worldwide have exerted a great deal of effort in preparing their own Pandemic Flu plans. Onondaga County is fortunate enough to have utilized and referenced these public documents in the crafting of our Preparedness and Response Plan. Onondaga County would like to specifically acknowledge the authors of the Fairfax County Pandemic Influenza Response Plan. We invite you to visit all of our referenced sites and additional online resources to gain a more comprehensive perspective on the other response plans that are being drafted, globally, in regards to Pandemic.

Pandemic Flu *Quick Facts*

What is pandemic flu?

- A pandemic is a disease that affects people all around the world.
- Pandemic flu is when a new type of flu virus appears and spreads easily between people. Because it will be a new type of virus, vaccines **will not** be available right away, many people could get sick and the sickness could be fatal.

Will a pandemic flu happen?

- Experts agree that the world **will** experience another pandemic but it is impossible to know exactly **when** the next pandemic will happen.
- International, Federal, State and Local public health organizations are actively monitoring and sharing information about worldwide flu patterns so that we will recognize whether a new virus is spreading rapidly.

What is Bird Flu?

- It is very common for wild birds to carry viruses in their intestines but not get sick. In 1997 scientists discovered a new type of virus called H5N1 that is highly contagious amongst wild birds, and often causes death to domesticated birds (chicken, turkey, etc.). **The H5N1 Bird Flu virus is not a pandemic flu.**
- Almost all of the people that have gotten sick from H5N1, had frequent contact with birds.

How will a pandemic flu affect your life?

- If a pandemic flu spreads across the world, then many people could potentially become ill.
- You can expect that many people will not go to work either because they are sick, caring for a sick relative or staying home to avoid becoming sick.
- If the pandemic is very contagious with a high death rate, the Onondaga County Health Commissioner may close certain public gathering areas (schools, malls, etc.) to slow down the spread of the disease
- A serious pandemic flu outbreak means that many services that individuals and families in our community rely upon may not be available for a period of time (i.e. public transportation, limited access stores, etc.)

What can you, as an individual, do to prepare?

- Practice, **and teach your children**, healthy habits and the importance of personal hygiene;
 - ★ Cover your mouth when you cough
 - ★ Wash your hands regularly.
 - ★ Don't share personal items such as toothbrushes, straws, etc.
- Prepare an emergency kit of non-perishable foods, drinking water and medical "essentials".
- Stay healthy during flu season and get your **seasonal flu shots!**
- Explore the Onondaga County Pandemic Flu Community Planning Guide and learn about what the County is doing to prepare.

Executive Summary

The quality of a community's response to an emergency is related directly to the quality of its emergency management preparedness. Although Onondaga County has a Comprehensive Emergency Management Plan to respond to all types of emergencies, the issue of pandemic influenza poses so many new variables that additional layers of planning and coordination will be necessary in order to minimize the threat to public health and ensure the continuation of essential government services.

The Purpose of Planning for a Pandemic

Due to its "global nature", a pandemic influenza event will most likely affect every resident of Onondaga County, either directly (*personal or family illness*) or indirectly (*discontinuation of community services*). The Onondaga County Health Department has developed a plan that details the County's public health response and defines activities that will be implemented to minimize the direct health impact that our community will face. To complement the Health Department's Pandemic Flu Preparedness and Response Plan, Onondaga County has developed a plan for the continuation of essential government services. Each Department within County government is drafting its own Continuity of Operations Plan to help ensure that we are still able to deliver the critical services that our community needs.

The Purpose of the Onondaga County Pandemic Flu Community Planning Guide

- ★ Provide an informational overview to the public on the County's preparedness
- ★ Serve as a tool to assist members of the public in their own planning and preparedness

Organization of the Pandemic Flu Community Planning Guide

SECTION 1: INTRODUCTION

- Background information about pandemic flu
- How does a pandemic differ from avian flu ("bird flu") and routine seasonal flu
- The World Health Organization's "Phases of an Influenza Pandemic"
- Centers for Disease Control's "Pandemic Severity Index"

SECTION 2: PLANNING FRAMEWORK

- Key planning assumptions
- Official responsibilities
 - ⇒ International Level
 - ⇒ Federal Level
 - ⇒ State Level
 - ⇒ Local Responsibilities
 - ⇒ Individuals and Families
- Onondaga County Health Department's key planning principles and strategies for crafting a suitable public health response

SECTION 3: AUTHORITIES

- Authorities granted to key persons before, during, and following a pandemic flu event.
 - ⇒ New York Governor
 - ⇒ New York State Health Commissioner
 - ⇒ Onondaga County Executive
 - ⇒ City Mayors Village Mayors and Town Supervisors
 - ⇒ Onondaga County Commissioner of Emergency Management
 - ⇒ Onondaga County Commissioner of Health
- Key public health and emergency laws

SECTION 4: COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGIES

- Onondaga County communications activities
 - ⇒ Before a pandemic event
 - ⇒ During a pandemic event
 - ⇒ After a pandemic event
- Key messages and methods for distributing information

SECTION 5: RESPONSE AND RECOVERY

- Onondaga County Health Department's public health response during each level of the "pandemic phase"
- Information regarding the prioritization of vaccinations during a pandemic
- Centers for Disease Control suggested non-medical community mitigation strategies

SECTION 6: CONTINUITY OF ESSENTIAL GOVERNMENT SERVICES

- Planning for the continuation of essential services during a pandemic
- Continuation of essential services checklist

Appendices

★ Helpful Planning Resources

- Individual and Family Planning Resources
- Business Planning Resources
- Community and Faith Based Organizations Planning Resources
- State and Local Government Planning Checklist
- Additional helpful online resources

★ Sample of Public Education Materials

★ General Appendices

- References used in the development of this planning guide
- Dictionary/Glossary of terms commonly used

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