



Flu Pandemic News Brief for ESRD Facilities

ESRD Network of Texas, Inc. (#14)

Information on emergency preparedness plans for pandemic flu outbreak

The **overall cause for concern** and alarm arises from the possibility of a human becoming infected with the human influenza strain **and** the avian strain, thus serving as a “mixing vessel” for a new subtype with enough human genes to easily transmit this new strain easily from person to person.

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Did You Know ?

Each year approximately **200,000** people are hospitalized with seasonal flu.

Another **36,000** die from the seasonal flu virus.

5 - 20 percent of the population are affected each year with common flu symptoms including fatigue, headache, fever and gastrointestinal disturbances.

Compared to these numbers - death and hospitalizations related to a pandemic flu outbreak would be *staggering*.

Types of flu (CDC 2005)

Seasonal Flu: A contagious respiratory illness caused by influenza viruses.

Avian Flu: Also called bird flu, it is caused by avian influenza viruses, which occur *naturally* among birds. Migratory waterfowl - most notably wild ducks - are the natural host for avian influenza viruses, and these birds are also the most resistant to infec-

tion (WHO 2005).

Pandemic Flu: A flu pandemic is a global outbreak that occurs when a new influenza A virus causes serious human illness and spreads easily from person to person. An influenza pandemic is a global outbreak of disease that occurs when a new influenza A virus appears or “emerges” in the human population, causes serious illness, and then spreads easily from person to person worldwide.

Pandemics are different from seasonal outbreaks or “epidemics” of influenza as follows:

- Seasonal outbreaks are caused by *subtypes* of influenza viruses that are already in existence among people.
- Pandemic outbreaks are caused by *new subtypes* or by subtypes that have *never* circulated (spread) among people or that have not circulated among people for a long time.
- Past influenza pandemics have led to high levels of illness, death, social disruption, and economic loss. (Avian MD, 2005).
- The H5N1 avian strain is highly infectious in other continents such as Northern and Southern Asia, Europe.
- North America has experienced outbreaks as recent as

Hand washing is the single most important infection control procedure.

November, 2005. Interpandemic Period

Phase 1: No new influenza virus subtypes have been detected in humans. An influenza virus subtype that has caused human infection may be present in animals. If present in animals, the risk of human infection or disease is considered to be low.

Phase 2: No new influenza virus

Stages of a Pandemic

subtypes have been detected in humans. However, a circulating animal influenza virus subtype poses a substantial risk of human disease.

Pandemic Alert Period

Phase 3: Human infection(s) with a new subtype but no human-to-human spread, or at most, rare instances of spread to a close contact.

Phase 4: Current Phase

Small cluster(s) with limited human-to-human transmission but spread is highly localized, suggesting that the virus is not well adapted to humans.

Phase 5: Larger cluster(s) but human-to-human spread is still localized, suggesting that the virus is

increasingly better adapted to humans but may not yet be fully transmissible. (substantial pandemic risk).

Pandemic Period

Phase 6: Pandemic

Increased and sustained transmission in the general population.

What about Quarantines?

It is possible- perhaps even probable- that both patients and staff may be prohibited from getting to the dialysis unit in the event of quarantine.

In all probability, based on information gathered from Health Departments, the CDC and the World Health Organization, quarantine may be mandated to control the spread of the disease **IF** a pandemic occurs.

Quarantine

Restrains the activities or communication of persons or the transportation of goods and services to prevent the spread of disease.

Enforces isolation in a certain area- **all** individuals in a community or area are restricted.

An epidemic tends to affect a disproportionately large number of individuals within a:

- *population*
 - *community*
 - *region*
- at the same time.*

The Staff's Role in Prevention

The CDC recommends the following general steps to prevent illness:

- Avoid close contact with anyone sick.
- Cover your mouth and nose when coughing or sneezing.
- Clean your hands often.
- Avoid touching your face.

Droplet Precautions

- If a patient is suspected or is known to be infected, droplet precautions should be used

and the patient should wear a mask.

- Limit the movement and transport of the patient within the dialysis unit. If transport or movement is necessary, minimize dispersal of droplets by masking the patient.
- Ensure at least a 3 foot space between all patients in your unit.
- Have tissues readily available for patient use at each station along with an open trash receptacle.

Since it is highly likely that dialysis patients and/or staff may live either inside or outside a quarantined area and thus be unable to get to the unit and given the complexity of the treatment needs for patients, it is critical that planning begin immediately.

Preparation - Make a Plan Now

- Evaluate staff and partner with other providers in relation to local area maps to formulate lists of staff along with contact information by region. *Staff that typically commute may live within a quarantined area so may not reach their home unit, but may be able to staff units within a quarantined area.*
- Contact your regional director and inquire about corporate pandemic preparedness.
- Assess facility supplies and develop strategic plans for sharing of supplies between units.
- Contact other providers in your local area to facilitate communications and possible transfer of patients if your facility is unable to render care.
- Inform patients of your emergency plans, including alternate sites where they may be able to acquire treatment.
- Contact the local media to obtain information on a contact person for public service announcements prior to an emergency.
- Contact the local authorities to ascertain their roles and responsibilities during an emergency and in the event of a pandemic.
- Evaluate your infection control practices and re-educate staff, patients, families and transportation companies.
- Emphasize droplet precautions to prevent the spread of influenza.
- Do a walk through of your unit from the front door to identify ways to minimize touching of common items such as door knobs that are normally closed that, if left open, would reduce exposure.
- Assess the impact of probable school closings on staffing.

The Staff's Role in Prevention

- Wash hands after touching blood, body fluids, secretions, excretions, and contaminated items, whether or not gloves are worn.
- Wash hands immediately after gloves are removed, between patient contacts, and when otherwise indicated to avoid transfer of microorganisms to other patients or environments. *It may be necessary to wash hands between tasks and procedures on the same patient to prevent cross-contamination of different body sites.*
- Use an antimicrobial agent or a waterless antiseptic agent to control outbreaks or hyperendemic infections.
- Consider placing antibacterial hand sanitizing gel at each station for patient and employee use after coughing, sneezing or nose blowing.

Hand washing— still the single most important infection control procedure!

Check Out These Links to Pandemic Flu Resources On Our Website www.esrdnetwork.org

To locate Pandemic Flu Resources → Click Disaster Resources Button on Home Page
→ When Index Page appears, click Pandemic Flu

Centers for Disease Control (CDC) Resources (www.cdc.gov):

- CDC Pandemic Flu Home Page
- Key Facts about Pandemic Influenza
- Pandemic Influenza Toolkit is a wealth of clinical resources and information about providing care during an influenza pandemic in the United States that includes:
 - *Historical overview of flu pandemics and FAQ*
 - *Professional guidance for surveillance, laboratory diagnostics and clinical guidelines*
 - *Healthcare planning, community disease control, infection control and prevention*
 - *Workforce support: Psychosocial considerations and information needs*
 - *Vaccine distribution/use and treatment with anti-viral drugs*
 - *Prevention and health education for patients*
 - *Travel advice*

PandemicFlu.gov (www.pandemicflu.gov): Official U.S. government website for information about pandemic flu and avian flu.

Texas Department of State Health Services (DSHS) Resources (www.dshs.state.tx.us):

DSHS Pandemic Influenza Preparedness Plan is available in either full text or Executive Summary, this document discusses the possibility of an Influenza pandemic, status of vaccine development for avian flu, antivirals, Texas preparedness plan goals and objectives, DSHS activities, synopsis of the plan based on the 2005 World Health Organization (WHO) pandemic periods and phases, and DSHS next steps (available in full text or Executive Summary).

Patient Education Posters and Handouts:

- American Lung Association handout in English and Spanish: **Good Health Habits to Prevent the Spread of the Flu** (www.lungusa.org)
- CDC brochure: **Cold or Flu. Antibiotics Don't Work for You** discusses the wise use of antibiotics and the risk of taking antibiotics to treat a common cold or the flu. (www.cdc.gov/drugresistance/community/tools.htm)

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Supporting Quality Care

Developed by ESRD NW # 12 (1/06)
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BUSINESS PANDEMIC INFLUENZA PLANNING CHECKLIST - MODIFIED FOR ESRD PROVIDERS

ORIGINAL DOCUMENT LOCATED AT WWW.CDC.GOV/BUSINESS

In the event of pandemic influenza, businesses will play a key role in protecting employees' health and safety as well as limiting the negative impact to the economy and society. Planning for pandemic influenza is critical. To assist you in your efforts, the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) have developed the following checklist for large businesses. It identifies important, specific activities large businesses can do now to prepare, many of which will also help you in other emergencies. Further information can be found at www.pandemicflu.gov and www.cdc.gov/business. (CDC, 2005)

1.1 PLAN FOR THE IMPACT OF A PANDEMIC ON YOUR DIALYSIS FACILITIES.

Completed	In Progress	Not Started	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Identify a pandemic coordinator and/or team with defined roles and responsibilities for preparedness and response planning.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Identify essential employees and materials/supplies required to maintain dialysis services during a pandemic.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Develop and plan for scenarios likely to occur during a pandemic, such as changes in staffing, need for additional hygiene supplies, shift changes, etc.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Find up-to-date, reliable pandemic information from community public health, emergency management, and other sources and make sustainable links.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Establish an emergency communications plan and revise periodically. This plan includes identification of key contacts (with back-ups), chain of communications (including suppliers and patients, and processes for tracking and communicating business and employee status.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Implement an exercise/drill to test your plan, and revise periodically.

1.2 PLAN FOR THE IMPACT OF A PANDEMIC ON YOUR EMPLOYEES AND PATIENTS.

Completed	In Progress	Not Started	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Forecast and allow for employee absences during a pandemic due to factors such as personal illness, family member illness, community containment measures and quarantines, school and/or business closures, and public transportation closures.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Implement guidelines to modify the frequency and type of face-to-face contact (e.g. hand-shaking, seating in meetings, office layout, shared workstations) among employees and between employees and patients (refer to CDC recommendations).
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Encourage and track annual influenza vaccination for employees and patients.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Evaluate employee access to and availability of healthcare services during a pandemic, and improve services/availability as needed.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Evaluate employee access to and availability of mental health and social services during a pandemic, including corporate, community and faith-based resources, and improve services/availability as needed.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Identify employees and key customers with special needs, and incorporate the requirements of such persons into your preparedness plans.

MISCELLANEOUS SUPPLIES FOR PANDEMIC PREPARATION

During a pandemic the volume of supplies used may increase greatly placing your unit in short supply of essential items. Plan ahead for additional tissue, paper towels, gloves, masks, soap, bleach, toilet tissue, biohazard trash bags, hand-washing gel (consider at each station), antibacterial spray for door knobs, phones, etc, rock salt for the water softener, testing strips, carbon filters or back-up deionization services. Transient patients may arrive at your unit plan in advance for their care.

1.3 ESTABLISH POLICIES TO BE IMPLEMENTED DURING A PANDEMIC.

Completed	In Progress	Not Started	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Establish Policies for employee compensation and sick-leave absences unique to a pandemic (e.g. non-punitive, liberal leave), including policies on when a previously ill person is no longer infectious and can return to work after illness.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Establish policies for flexible work hours (e.g. staggered shifts).
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Establish policies for preventing influenza spread at the work site (e.g. promoting respiratory hygiene/cough etiquette, and prompt exclusion of people with influenza symptoms).
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Establish policies for employees who have been exposed to pandemic influenza, are suspected to be ill, or become ill at the work site (e.g. infection control response, immediate mandatory sick leave).
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Establish policies for restricting travel to affected geographic areas, evacuating to affected geographic areas, evacuating employees working in or near an affected area when an outbreak begins, and guidance for employees returning from affected areas (refer to CDC travel recommendations).
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Set up authorities, triggers, and procedures for activating and terminating the company's response plan, altering business operations (e.g. shutting down operations in affected areas), and transferring business knowledge to key employees.

1.4 ALLOCATE RESOURCES TO PROTECT YOUR EMPLOYEES AND PATIENTS DURING A PANDEMIC

Completed	In Progress	Not Started	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Provide sufficient and accessible infection control supplies (e.g. hand-hygiene products, tissues and receptacles for their disposal).
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Enhance communications with the upper management team of your organization.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Ensure availability of medical consultation and advice for emergency response.

1.5 COMMUNICATE TO AND EDUCATE YOUR EMPLOYEES

Completed	In Progress	Not Started	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Develop and disseminate programs and materials covering pandemic fundamentals (e.g. signs and symptoms of influenza, modes of transmission), personal and family protection and response strategies (e.g. hand-hygiene, coughing/sneezing etiquette, contingency plans).
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Anticipate employee fear and anxiety, rumors and misinformation; plan communications accordingly.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Ensure that communications are culturally and linguistically appropriate.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Disseminate information to employees about your pandemic preparedness and response plan.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Develop platforms (e.g. hot lines, dedicated web sites) for communicating pandemic status and actions to employees, vendors, suppliers, and customers inside and outside the dialysis clinic in a consistent and timely way, including redundancies in the emergency contact systems used.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Identify community sources for timely and accurate pandemic information and resources for obtaining counter-measures (e.g. vaccines and antivirals).

1.6 COORDINATE WITH EXTERNAL ORGANIZATIONS AND HELP YOUR COMMUNITY

Completed	In Progress	Not Started	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Share your plans with your regional ESRD Network (optional).
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Share your best practices with other dialysis units in your community to improve community response efforts.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Collaborate with major local healthcare facilities to share your plans and understand their capabilities and plans.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Communicate with the local public health agencies and/or emergency responders about the services your unit can contribute to the community.
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Communicate with the transportation companies to understand their capabilities and plans.