Adapting Your Business Continuity Plan: Preparing for a Pandemic

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Web Seminar
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Conventional Influenza (Flu)

- Each winter "seasonal" flu
- Types vary; new strains develop
- Person-to-person transmission
- Vaccine
- Average deaths: 36,000 in USA

Avian Influenza or Bird Flu

- Detected in 1997
- Hard for humans to get
- Direct contact from infected poultry or contaminated surfaces.
- No vaccine.
- 200 cases detected worldwide.

Generous funding for this program was provided by the Public Entity Risk Institute (www.riskinstitute.org)
Avian Influenza
or Bird Flu

- Begins like conventional flu.
- Can develop life-threatening complications.
- Virus could mutate (change) to easily infect humans.
- Flu outbreak could occur.
- Worst case scenario = global epidemic.

Influenza Pandemic

- Large scale epidemic of influenza virus
- 3 to 4 times a century
  - Every 25 to 33 years
- Average deaths: millions worldwide
- Last pandemic: Spanish flu in 1918.
  - 88 years ago
- Statistically, we’re overdue.

Bird Flu Overview

- Wild birds don’t get sick.
- Wild birds can easily pass the virus to domestic birds raised for food.
- People have been infected when they came into contact with infected, uncooked ducks, chicken or geese or with surfaces on which infected raw fowl has been.
Understanding the Risk

- Risk increases, if virus changes so it no longer needs a domestic bird to transmit flu from wild birds to a person.
- Risk increases tremendously, if virus changes so a person with bird flu can give it directly to another person.
- CDC, WHO and others agree that the world is overdue for an influenza pandemic.
- It may be caused by avian flu virus H5N1 or another strain.
- Waves last from 4 to 12 weeks.
- Expect medical shortages, prolonged disruptions of government services, a run on essential goods and services, power outages and brownouts.

Influenza Pandemic

- One of strongest candidates is the highly pathogenic (deadly) variation of the H5N1 subtype of Influenza A virus. This is a specific bird flu.
  - Minor—can be contained quickly.
  - Severe—some communities cut themselves off totally; populations in others are halved by death; others are affected by high degree of illness and bereavement.

Influenza Pandemic—Nature

- Not enough doctors, hospital rooms or medical supplies for the living.
- Great social disruption and fear.
- Selfishness, lack of trust, illegal behavior and ignorance impede efforts.
Influenza Pandemic—Phases

Interpandemic period:
1. Low risk
2. New virus

Pandemic alert period:
3. Self limiting
4. Person to person
5. Epidemic

Pandemic period:
6. Pandemic

Symptoms of Bird Flu
- Fever > 100.4°F (38°C)
- Cough (dry or productive)
- Sore throat
- Muscle aches
- Eye infection (conjunctivitis/pink eye)
Reduce Exposure—Public Health Authorities

- Monitor outbreaks of human illness associated with bird flu
- Issue advisories
- Support vaccine research/production

Reduce Exposure—Food Handler Precautions

- Wash hands before and after handling raw poultry.
- Prevent cross-contamination of surfaces.
- Thoroughly cook poultry to 180°F.
- Use care in handling egg shells and raw egg products.

Reduce Exposure—Medical Worker Precautions

- Wash hands before and after all patient contact.
- Wear gloves and gown for all patient contact.
- Wear eye protection within 3 feet of patient.
Reduce Exposure—Traveler Precautions

- Avoid poultry farms.
- Avoid animals in open-air markets.
- Avoid surfaces contaminated with feces from any animal, especially poultry.

Strategies—Work

- Telecommute
- Union and sick leave policies
- Business continuity plans
- Reduction or loss of income

Strategies—Organizing

- Crisis packets for employees
- Inventory employees equipment (could they work at home)
- List potential volunteers
Strategies—Food Storage

- Store water and food
- Nonperishable
- Don’t require refrigeration
- Easy to prepare without fuel
- Require little or no water

Strategies—Personal Health

- Get flu shot to protect from seasonal flu.
- Get pneumonia shot to prevent secondary infection if 65+ or have chronic illness (diabetes or asthma)

Strategies—Personal Hygiene

- Wash hands frequently.
- Cover mouth and nose with tissue when cough or sneeze.
- Deposit used tissues in waste basket.
- Do not use cloth handkerchiefs.
- Reusables spread germs.
- Wash hands after coughing or sneezing with soap and warm water; alcohol-based hand sanitizers/gels kill bacteria and viruses.
- Stay at home if you are sick.
- Eat a balanced diet with a variety of foods.
- Do not eat raw eggs or raw-egg products.
- Drink lots of water.
- Go easy on salt, sugar, alcohol and saturated fat.
Your Policies and Procedures

- Minimize confusion
- Narrow activities assigned to management in an emergency.
- Communicable Disease Policy:
  - Avian flu is an infectious or communicable disease.
  - One infected employee could infect a percentage or all of your workforce.
  - Managing workplace health includes anticipating, recognizing, evaluating and controlling conditions in the workplace that may cause a worker to become ill.

Communicable Diseases Policy

- Other infectious diseases are:
  - Common cold
  - Seasonal flu
  - Pink eye
  - Mumps
  - Chicken pox
  - Tuberculosis

What existing policies do you have that deal with infectious diseases?
- Cough/sneeze etiquette?
- Stay home until no longer infectious?
- Go home if discover sick after arriving at work?
- Instruct supervisor to send people home under specific conditions?
- Recommend employees get vaccinations for seasonal flu or Avian flu, if safe and available.
Communicable Diseases Policy

- Require a doctor’s note when a person is absent a specific number of days or due to a contagious disease?
- Allow scheduling employees in shifts to reduce chance of infecting everyone?
- Permit vacation leave flexibility for staff to care for children if schools close or family members who fall ill?

Sample:
Leave for Exposure
http://hr.unc.edu/DATA/SPA/leave/exposure

Your BCP

- In a disaster there is no “business as usual.”
- The goal for a nonprofit is to continue to provide mission-critical programs and services.
- Long-term, helps promote restoration of day-to-day functions.
Flu Reality Check

- Your dedicated staff (paid and volunteer) may not show up for work:
  - Sick themselves
  - Fear becoming ill
  - Tending children if school closed down
  - Caring for ill family members

Reduced workforce requires rethinking and re-staffing critical jobs.

Focus only on the:
- Mission-critical tasks
- Steps required to fulfill them
- Who can do the jobs

Example
- Only the bookkeeper shows up out of a staff of 10. What does the bookkeeper need to do to deliver mission-critical services for your nonprofit?

- No matter what the crisis, the plan is put into effect.
- The plan helps keep the doors open and get the nonprofit up to full working order after the crisis has passed.
Generous funding for this program was provided by the Public Entity Risk Institute (www.riskinstitute.org)

**BCP Variables**

- How do you cross train your staff?
- What do you do if your current location is not usable?
- What do you do if entire community or county is affected?

**Writing a Staffing Plan**

- Start at the end and work backwards.
- Re-assign workers to areas of greatest need.
- Identify a central point to receive requests for staffing help and where staff can report to work.
- Establish and update database with names, job titles and home phone numbers of all employees.

**Writing a Staffing Plan**

- Review current labor contracts and policies.
- Set up a system to accept temporary help from people with needed skills.
- Identify communication and training needs.
- Cross train your staff to handle more than one type of job.
- People may have to multi-task until additional staff arrive.
Emergency Plan

- Writing an emergency staffing plan helps you keep your cool in disaster.
- Look at the big picture: what and who is needed to provide basic services?
- Don’t get bogged down in trying to plan to deal with each type of disaster scenario.

Communications Plan

- People’s fear of the disease or their being exposed to it is greater than the statistical odds that they will be exposed.
- Staff is reading and listening to same news stories as you.
- Concerned for their health and health of their families.
- Remember the police in New Orleans.

Communications Plan

- Talking up policies to staff now will help them focus on their jobs when the crisis hits.
- Educate employees what to expect.
- Inform employees how to proceed.
- Use the database with names, job titles and home phone numbers of all employees to provide new information.
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Communications Plan

- Invite questions from the staff.
- Encourage suggestions from all staff for providing a healthier workplace.
- Promote community sites, dates and times where free flu shots will be given.
- List nearby clinics that offer healthcare.
- Educate staff about personal hygiene

Communications Plan

- Provide up-to-date bulletins.
- Listen to rumor rumblings.
- Provide factual rebuttals.

Summary

- Make sure you have up-to-date communicable disease policy and procedures.
- Know what your mission-critical tasks are, the steps involved and who can do them.
- Cross train your staff.
- Educate your paid and volunteer staff (and possibly clients).
- Provide updates to staff and clients.
Current Information

- US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
  www.cdc.gov/flu/avian
- World Health Organization
  www.who.int/csr/disease/avian_influenza/en/

Resources

- www.webmd.com
- www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus
- www.osha.gov
- www.mayoclinic.com