



# PANDEMIC PLAN

August, 2009

## BACKGROUND

The World Health Organization (WHO) defines six phases for a pandemic. In Phase 1, no viruses circulating among animals have been reported to cause infections in humans. Phase 2 occurs when an animal influenza virus is known to have caused infection in humans. That is, there is “a potential pandemic threat.”

Phase 3 occurs when there are sporadic outbreaks but no “human-to-human transmission sufficient to sustain community-level outbreaks.” Phase 4 is when there is human-to-human transmission. Phase 5 coincides with human-to-human transmission in at least two countries. Phase 6 is when there is a community level outbreak in one additional country and a global pandemic is underway. Please note that the phases are based on transmission but not severity. WHO is currently considering revising pandemic phases with a component for mortality.

Alberta divides its Pandemic Influenza Plan into three phases:

- Pre-pandemic Phase: a new type of influenza virus has not been detected anywhere or a new strain has been found only in a small number of people, most likely outside of Canada.
- Pandemic Phase: the WHO declares that an influenza pandemic is underway and the new flu is detected in Canada. There will be localized outbreaks of the flu to start, followed by broader outbreaks that will occur in waves.
- Post-Pandemic Phase: the number of cases and deaths from the flu returns to normal levels and the pandemic is declared to be over.

We use the Alberta phases for our plan. The information in our plan is based on the latest information from Health Canada and Alberta Health and Wellness. The plan may be revised based on emergent information from either organization. To confirm the last date this document was revised, please refer to the footer.

## INFLUENZA-LIKE ILLNESS (ILI) ASSESSMENT

An individual is considered compromised when they display:

- ✓ Acute onset of respiratory illness
- ✓ Fever (>38C), except with elderly people who may be ill without a fever
- ✓ Cough
- ✓ One or more of sore throat, joint pain, muscle pain, or extreme exhaustion

## PREPARATION

In the event of a pandemic, the response of schools will be guided by information from the Capital Health Authority. Therefore, our focus is on prevention and there are five key factors to consider.

The five factors are:

1. Ensure there is an adequate supply of soap and alcohol-based hand rub.

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2. Practice or inform students regarding proper hand washing technique.
3. Prepare posters about hand washing that may be placed on the mirrors in all washrooms.
4. Acquire suitable custodial products and in-service custodians regarding the products.
5. Acquire a suitable supply of disposable N95 masks.

## PROCEDURES

### PRE-PANDEMIC PHASE

- ✓ Acquire and maintain a suitable inventory of soap, antimicrobial soap, and alcohol-based hand rub.
- ✓ Acquire and maintain a supply of disposable N95 face masks.
- ✓ Make any modifications necessary to shut off drinking fountains.
- ✓ Practice with or inform students regarding proper hand washing technique.
- ✓ Practice with or inform students regarding coughing into their sleeve or collar, not their hand.
- ✓ Prepare posters regarding hand washing.
- ✓ Acquire and maintain a suitable inventory of low level disinfectant cleaning supplies.
- ✓ In-service custodial staff regarding the proper usage of low level disinfectant cleaning supplies.
- ✓ Once a week, custodial staff perform the full cleaning procedure outlined as per the "Pandemic Procedures for Custodial Staff."
- ✓ Sanitizing hand dispensers placed in all high risk areas and all high traffic areas.

### PANDEMIC PHASE

- ✓ Place the appropriate hand washing materials in washrooms and sanitizing hand rub in all classrooms, recognizing that some laboratories have soap and water available and do not require a dispenser.
- ✓ All students and staff clean their hands upon entering a classroom and when exiting the classroom.
- ✓ Shut off the drinking fountains.
- ✓ Daily disinfect every public computer and associated peripherals.
- ✓ Custodial staff follow the cleaning procedure outlined in the "Pandemic Procedures for Custodial Staff."
- ✓ To preserve the sanitization of the school environment, schools will not be available for community use.
- ✓ Monitor hand washing.
- ✓ Post hand washing posters.
- ✓ Curtail lending of pens, pencils, and other hand held tools or disinfect such tools on a daily basis.
- ✓ Provide masks and isolate all individuals who develop Influenza Like Illness (ILI) during the school day and until they can be released to a parent.
- ✓ Anyone with ILI or in contact with an individual with ILI in the last three days is not allowed at school.
- ✓ Implementation of other hygienic measures: one-use tissues for wiping noses, covering nose and mouth when sneezing and coughing, hand washing after coughing sneezing or using tissues, not touching eyes or nose.

- ✓ Schools track daily attendance by absence type and report to the Superintendent (or designate) both the percentage of staff and the percentage of students absent with Influenza Like Illness. Schools may also be required to report the same information to Capital Health.
- ✓ Schools close, at the discretion of the Superintendent or by order of Capital Health.

## POST-PANDEMIC

- ✓ Revert to preventative measures.

## SERVICE LEVELS

As long as schools are open, they will continue with their primary purpose whether staff absenteeism is at the 5% or 10% level. Additional manpower resources will be provided through our existing substitute services. Schools should have a plan as to how they will function if staff absenteeism reaches 20% and schools have not been closed by Capital Health. Should there be 30% staff absenteeism and Capital Health has not declared a Phase 2 pandemic, schools will be open but there will be no classes—similar to an inclement weather situation.

Central Office services (Accounting, Payroll, Personnel, Maintenance) will be completed on a priority basis. School custodial services will focus on disinfection. Maintenance and Custodial personnel may be redirected from other areas to maintain disinfection standards as long as schools are open.

## HOW TO REDUCE THE RISK

Capital Health has a variety of excellent information available on their website. At <http://www.capitalhealth.ca/EspeciallyFor/PandemicInfluenza/SchoolsAndPreschools/default.htm> we find:

- Quality posters suitable for printing and posting, in PDF format, for covering your cough and hand washing in the section titled “Cover Your Cough/Handwashing.”
- A concise information brochure titled “Pandemic Influenza – Frequently Asked Questions.”
- A checklist of considerations for schools titled “Pandemic Influenza – Schools Checklist.”