PANDEMIC INFLUENZA PLANNING CHECKLIST FOR BUSINESSES

The purpose of this checklist is to assist businesses in managing the impact of an influenza pandemic. This checklist identifies specific activities which businesses should undertake in preparation for an influenza pandemic.

It is important to recognize how an influenza pandemic differs from other service disruptions and therefore demands a different set of continuity assumptions. Pandemic influenza will be widely dispersed geographically with not all countries being affected at the same time and is expected to occur in waves that could last several months at a time. Businesses should plan allowing for the possibility that a third to a half of staff could be absent from work for extended periods, spanning successive waves of the pandemic and covering a period of multiple months.

Note: The items in this checklist are generic and may not be applicable to all businesses.

PLAN FOR THE IMPACT OF A PANDEMIC ON YOUR BUSINESS

☐ Identify a pandemic coordinator and/or team with defined roles and responsibilities for preparedness and response planning
☐ Identify essential employees and functions required to maintain business operations during a pandemic
☐ Train and prepare ancillary workforce
☐ Develop and prepare for scenarios likely to result in an increase or decrease in demand for your products and/or services during a pandemic.
☐ Determine potential impact of a pandemic on company business financials using multiple possible scenarios
☐ Determine potential impact of a pandemic on business-related travel
☐ Find up-to-date and reliable pandemic information

PLAN FOR THE IMPACT OF A PANDEMIC ON YOUR EMPLOYEES AND CUSTOMERS

☐ 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 disruptions to public transport
☐ Implement guidelines to modify the frequency and type of face-to-face contact among employees and between employees and customers
☐ Evaluate employee access to and availability of healthcare services during a pandemic
☐ Evaluate employee access to and availability of mental health and social services during a pandemic, including corporate, community and faith-based resources
☐ Identify employees and key customers with special needs and incorporate the requirements of such persons into your preparedness plan
ESTABLISH POLICIES TO BE IMPLEMENTED DURING A PANDEMIC

- Establish policies for employee compensation and sick-leave absences unique to a pandemic
- Establish policies for flexible worksite and flexible work hours
- Establish policies for preventing influenza spread at the worksite (e.g. promoting respiratory hygiene/cough etiquette)
- Establish policies for employees who have been exposed to pandemic influenza, are suspected to be ill, or become ill at the worksite
- Establish policies for restricting travel to affected geographic areas and guidance for employees returning from affected areas
- Set up authorities, triggers, and procedures for activating and terminating the company’s response plan, altering business operations, and transferring business knowledge to key employees

ALLOCATE RESOURCES TO PROTECT YOUR EMPLOYEES AND CUSTOMERS DURING A PANDEMIC

- Provide sufficient and accessible infection control supplies (e.g. hand-hygiene products, tissues and receptacles for their disposal) in all business locations
- Enhance communications and information technology infrastructures as needed to support remote access
- Ensure availability of medical consultation and advice for emergency response

COMMUNICATE TO AND EDUCATE YOUR EMPLOYEES

- Develop and disseminate information and materials covering pandemic fundamentals, personal and family protection and response strategies (e.g. signs and symptoms of influenza, modes of transmission, hand-hygiene and cough etiquette)
- Anticipate employee fear and anxiety, rumours and misinformation and plan communication accordingly
- Disseminate information to employees about your pandemic preparedness and response plan
- Provide information for the at-home care of ill employees and family members
- Develop mechanisms for communicating pandemic status and actions to employees, vendors, suppliers, and customers inside and outside the worksite in a consistent and timely way
- Identify community sources for timely and accurate pandemic information and resources

COORDINATE WITH EXTERNAL ORGANIZATIONS AND HELP YOUR COMMUNITY

- Collaborate with insurers and other organizations to share your pandemic plans and understand their capabilities and plans
- Collaborate with the Department of Health and/or emergency responders to participate in their planning processes, share your pandemic plans, and understand their capabilities and plans
- Communicate with the Department of Health and/or emergency responders about the assets and/or services your business could contribute to the community
- Share best practices with other businesses to improve community response

Adapted from “Business Pandemic Influenza Planning Checklist”
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