

Palm Beach State College
Florida's First Public Community College



PANDEMIC FLU PLAN

2011

Introduction

An influenza pandemic may occur when a new influenza virus appears against which the human population has no immunity. With the increase in global transport, as well as urbanization and overcrowded conditions in some areas, epidemics due to a new influenza virus are likely to take hold around the world, and become a pandemic faster than before.

The World Health Organization (WHO) has defined the phases of a pandemic to provide a global framework to aid in pandemic preparedness and response planning. Pandemics can be either mild or severe in the illness and death they cause, and the severity of a pandemic can change over the course of that pandemic. Therefore, effective pandemic preparedness is essential to mitigate the effects of a pandemic, particularly if it becomes severe.

World Health Organization Pandemic Flu Phases

The World Health Organization (WHO) has developed a global influenza preparedness plan, which defines the stages of a pandemic:

Phase 1. In nature, influenza viruses circulate continuously among animals, especially birds. Even though such viruses might theoretically develop into pandemic viruses, in this phase, no viruses circulating among animals have been reported to cause infections in humans.

Phase 2. An animal influenza virus circulating among domesticated or wild animals is known to have caused infection in humans, and is therefore considered a potential pandemic threat.

Phase 3. An animal or human-animal influenza virus has caused sporadic cases or small clusters of disease in people, but has not resulted in human-to-human transmission sufficient to sustain community-level outbreaks. Limited human-to-human transmission may occur under some circumstances, for example, when there is close contact between an infected person and an unprotected caregiver. However, limited transmission under such restricted circumstances does not indicate that the virus has gained the level of transmissibility among humans necessary to cause a pandemic.

Phase 4. Is characterized by verified human-to-human transmission of an animal or human-animal influenza virus able to cause “community-level outbreaks.” The ability to cause sustained disease outbreaks in a community marks a significant upwards shift in the risk for a pandemic. Phase 4 indicates a significant increase in risk of a pandemic but does not necessarily mean that a pandemic is imminent.

Phase 5. Is characterized by human-to-human spread of the virus into at least two countries in one WHO region. While most countries will not be affected at this stage, the declaration of Phase 5 is a strong signal that a pandemic is imminent and that the time to finalize the organization, communication, and implementation of the planned mitigation measures is short.

Phase 6. The global pandemic phase, which is characterized by community level outbreaks in at least one other country in a different WHO region in addition to the criteria defined in **Phase 5**.

During the **post-peak period**, pandemic disease levels in most countries with adequate surveillance will have dropped below peak observed levels. The post-peak period signifies that pandemic activity appears to be decreasing; however, it is uncertain if additional waves will occur and countries will need to be prepared for a second wave. Previous pandemics have been characterized by waves of activity spread over months. Pandemic waves can be separated by months and an immediate “at-ease” signal may be premature.

In the **post-pandemic period**, influenza disease activity will have returned to levels normally seen for seasonal influenza. It is expected that the pandemic virus will behave as a seasonal influenza A virus.

Palm Beach State College Pandemic Flu Plan and Preparedness

The Palm Beach State College Pandemic Flu Plan will become part of the overall Palm Beach State College Emergency Operations Plan. It contains the action steps Palm Beach State College will take and includes: (1) the central repository of information, tasks, policies, protocols, and procedures that will guide Palm Beach State College’s Pandemic Flu decision-making processes; and (2) the Palm Beach State response to any extended interruption of the College’s normal business operations or services, due to a Pandemic Flu outbreak.

Goals of the Pandemic Preparedness Plan:

1. Protect the health and lives of our students and staff by stopping, slowing, or otherwise limiting the spread of pandemic flu on campus.
2. Participate in general pandemic flu containment to reduce the spread of flu to the surrounding community.
3. Sustain the College’s infrastructure and mitigate the impact of pandemic flu on the College.
4. Sustain, as far as practical, the educational mission of the College.

Decision Making Process:

The President of Palm Beach State College is the responsible authority for overseeing all decision making of the College, including the College’s response to pandemic flu. In the event that the President is unavailable, the Vice President of Administration & Business Services will become the responsible authority.

The Emergency Management Team, as defined in the Palm Beach State College Emergency Operations Plan, will advise the President or designee to assist in making the critical decisions as to how the College responds in response to a pandemic flu that affects the College, its students, its faculty, and its staff. The Emergency Management Team will advise of recommendations or

mandates from governmental and health organizations at the international, national, state, and local levels.

The President or his designee will continuously update the Chairman of the Board of Trustees concerning the situation at the College.

The decision making at the College will be guided by directives and recommendations from the following agencies:

- 1. World Health Organization**
- 2. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention**
- 3. Florida Department of Health**
- 4. Palm Beach County Health Department**

College Response

The College response will correspond with the World Health Organization Phases and will be based on the recommendations and guidelines by the Centers for Disease and Control (CDC) and the Palm Beach Health Department. Each Pandemic Flu situation will vary in severity; therefore, responses may differ greatly based on the circumstances.

WHO PHASE	DESCRIPTION OF PHASE	ACTION TAKEN BY COLLEGE
PHASE 1	No cases of human transmission have occurred.	No action necessary by the College.
PHASE 2	The first case of efficient human-to-human transmission is reported	No action will be taken by the College unless recommended or mandated by Governmental or Health Organizations.
PHASE 3	Limited human-to-human transmission may occur under some circumstances, but not sufficient enough to cause a pandemic.	Key members of the Emergency Management Team will start to track and monitor national and local case reports and recommendations.
PHASE 4	Characterized by verified human-to-human transmission of an animal or human-animal influenza reassortant virus able to cause “community-level outbreaks.”	The College will take the following actions: Key members of the Emergency Management Team will continue tracking and monitoring national and local case reports and recommendations. All operations will continue as usual including classes.
PHASE 5	Characterized by human-to-human spread of the virus into at least two countries	Review and update all current emergency and communication plans

		<p>Meet to fine-tune all plans for responding to the Flu pandemic.</p> <p>Communication with the campus community will be increased to keep everyone informed of plans being implemented.</p> <p>Collaborate with the local health department, community organizations, local businesses, and social services on a plan for flu response.</p> <p>Encourage students, faculty, and staff to find out if they should get vaccinated against seasonal flu and current Pandemic Flu.</p> <p>Offer opportunities for students, faculty, and staff to get vaccinated on campus.</p> <p>Encourage students and staff to cover their mouths and noses with a tissue when they cough or sneeze. Also, provide them with easy access to tissues and running water and soap or alcohol-based hand cleaners. Remind them to cover coughs or sneezes using their elbow or shoulder instead of their hands when a tissue is not available.</p> <p>Establish regular schedules for frequent cleaning of surfaces and items that are more likely to have frequent hand contact such as desks, door knobs, keyboards, or counters, with cleaning agents that are usually used in these areas.</p> <p>Promote frequent cleaning of bathrooms and ensure adequate supplies of soap and paper towels.</p> <p>Provide disposable wipes so that commonly used surfaces such as chairs, remote controls, and keyboards shared by students can be wiped down prior to each use.</p> <p>Communicate with vendors who supply critical products and services, to ensure this will continue when flu conditions are more severe.</p> <p>Update student, faculty, and staff contact information as well as emergency contact lists.</p> <p>Encourage good hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette through direct education, communication materials such as posters and flyers, and other methods including e-mail, text messaging, or phone calls.</p>
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<p>PHASE 6</p>	<p>Global pandemic is under way.</p>	<p>Advise sick students, faculty, and staff to stay at home until at least 24 hours after they no longer have a fever or signs of a fever</p> <p>Discourage sick members of the public and sick visitors from attending institution-sponsored events until they are free of fever for at least 24 hours.</p> <p>Consider adjusting sick leave policies so sick faculty and staff can stay home.</p> <p>Review policies for students to ensure that there are no negative academic consequences for staying home while sick.</p> <p>Develop a plan and options for how work can be continued at home (e.g., homework packets, Web-based lessons, phone calls), if institutions suspend classes.</p> <p>Establish a method for maintaining contact with students who are sick.</p> <p>Encourage students and staff at higher risk of complications from flu to check with their health care provider about their options.</p> <p>Find ways to increase social distances (the space between people) in classrooms such as moving desks farther apart, leaving empty seats between students, holding outdoor classes, and using distance learning methods.</p> <p>Cancel, postpone, or discourage all institution-related and non-institution related mass gatherings. These include sporting events, performances, commencement ceremonies, fraternity and sorority parties, and other events that bring large groups of people into close contact with one another.</p> <p>Suspend classes. The CDC may recommend suspending classes if the flu starts causing severe disease in a lot of people. The College will work closely with local and state public health officials when deciding whether or not to suspend classes. The length of time classes should be suspended depends on the goal of suspending classes and the severity of existing illness. If the decision is made to suspend classes, CDC recommends doing so for at least 5–7 calendar days.</p>
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Departmental Responsibilities

The **College Relations & Marketing Department** is responsible for sustaining campus-wide communication by use of the E-2 Alert System, email, phones, the web site, and campus television/radio stations. In the event of a higher level alert, campus mail will be curtailed to reduce the spread of germs. The web site will be used for continuous updates.

The **President's Office** will issue directives concerning levels of alerts, reduction or cancellation in campus operations, and continuity of business affairs. All releases to media outlets will be approved by the President or his designee.

The **Academic Affairs Office** will advise the President's Office of class absentee rates in the event of a perceived threat (prior to suspension of any classes). The Vice President for Academic Affairs will direct all efforts related to continuation of studies. If the campus closes for less than two weeks, completion of the semester's work should still be possible. For closures greater than two weeks, extension of the semester may be required. Alternative learning modalities should be considered for each program or course.

The **Human Resources Office** will coordinate all staffing functions and be responsible for the continuation of payroll services in coordination with the Controller. Elective and paid time off benefits will be managed by Human Resources. The Office will maintain a ready list of all employees and their contact information. Human Resources will coordinate seasonal influenza vaccines for campus and any vaccines that are available for the current Pandemic Flu.

The **Safety & Risk Management Department** will act as the liaison to health and regulatory agencies and continuously provide the College with updates. The Safety Manager will act as Team Leader, as defined in the Emergency Operations Plan, for all Pandemic Flu situations. The Pandemic Flu information on the website will be maintained by the Safety Manager or designee. Any mandated Influenza monitoring or recordkeeping will be collected and maintained in the Safety Department.

The **Facilities Department** will proceed with cleaning duties as required or recommended by the Health Care and Regulatory Agencies. The Facilities Department will provide easily accessible hand sanitizer dispensers and wipes in designated campus buildings.

Continuity of Education:

Sustaining the College's educational mission is an important goal. However, a higher goal is to protect our students, staff, and faculty members from the health hazards of pandemic flu. Thus, our educational mission will necessarily be affected by the status of the pandemic flu. The College will follow the instructions of the Federal Centers for Disease Control the Public Health Departments. If these agencies demand that the College reduce or cease operation, we will follow these orders. Absent an order to shut down the College, we will try continue our mission of education.