

Communication Plan

Maine Pre-pandemic

- q Periodically review and revise Communication Plan as appropriate.
- q Place FCHN Pandemic Influenza Plan on intranet. Notify employees of availability of the plan.
- q Media training for CEO, COOs, Medical Director, CNO, VP, Infection control nurse, Community Relations staff, 2 physicians, 2 nurses, Healthy Community Coalition/ Franklin Health Access managers.
- q Develop templates for communication.
- q Review Appendix B, “Communications Issues During a Pandemic.”
- q Integrate HCC on FCHN phone system to ready for speedy adaptation of HCC to a flu phone bank.
- q Establish a list serve and phone list of all local communications officers for health and social service agencies and government.
- q Establish routine communication system between FCHN community relations leadership and colleague agencies, the State CDC, and federal CDC.
- q Community Relations prepares signs to direct employees in the event of a pandemic flu.
- q Establish NetNews as the vehicle through which to communicate pandemic flu news with FCHN employees.
- q Recruit volunteers for human resource pool.

Maine Level 1

(Alert Period)

- q Notify employees of the State’s declaration of the current pandemic level via Outlook and Meditech.
- q Establish a provisional budget for Healthy Community Coalition (HCC) and Franklin Health Access (FHA).
 - Send letters to all funders requesting continued grant funding for staffing and release from contractual obligations in the event of Level II or III pandemic. This will allow staff to be redeployed from categorical programs.
 - Based on response, establish a two-phased budget based on what staffing will be paid from grants, what staffing will require additional non-grant resources to deploy for pandemic flu, and what additional resources will be available for communication outreach.
 - Redeploy HCC and FHA staff in first phase of a new budget. These staff will set up a phone bank to respond to inquiries on the flu hotline.
- q Widely advertise the Greater Franklin County flu hotline (779-3147) and update its message to provide guidance on what people should do to be ready in case of a pandemic.
- q Identify individuals from human resource pool to help staff flu hotline.
- q Develop training for volunteers and FHA and HCC staff on hotline and triage (see Education Plan).

- q Update Health Leaders Forum. Alert them to FCHN flu hotline and website, and encourage them to develop their own plans. Alert them that at the following Health Leaders Forum meeting, the FCHN Pandemic Plan for Communications will be discussed.
- q Post signs for respiratory hygiene / cough etiquette in public areas, i.e.: ER, PTMA Waiting Rooms.
- q Monitor National and Maine CDC as well as international news media. Check the Health Alert Network (HAN).

Maine Levels II & III

(Evidence of pandemic flu outside the United States)

- q Notify employees of the State's declaration of the current pandemic level via Outlook and Meditech.
- q Confirm individuals from human resource pool to help staff flu hotline.
- q Create home-care kits for those individuals who will be turned away from the hospital. Kits will include instructions on home-base self-care and possibly other minimal supplies, such as a thermometer, masks, gloves, and hand sanitizer.
- q Pandemic Influenza Response Team assembles Communications Team, to include individuals who are not critical to day-to-day crisis management and thus can focus more time to communications: VP/FCHN, infection control nurse, Community Relations staff, 1 physician, 1 nurse manager at HCC. Also include or brief Administrator On-Call. VP/FCHN serves as the Public Information Officer (PIO). Set up weekly meetings. All public messages to staff, board, or public must go through this team or in a time-sensitive situation through the PIO. All members of the team have dedicated back-ups. All messages should be coordinated with local Emergency Operations Center, if applicable.
- q When Communications Team meets, they address the following agenda:
 - Review of key messages from Maine, federal CDC, and colleague agencies.
 - Review and evaluation of messages delivered in the prior week by FCHN.
 - Issues and concerns from callers to the flu hotline and others in the public, including rumors and potential for quelling.
 - Agreement on key messages for the week, including recorded message on flu hotline.
 - Agreement on modes of delivering key messages (public statements, flyers, advertisements, phone/internet, FCHN media, radio, other).
 - Update recorded message on flu hotline.
 - Communications Team puts out an update at the end of each meeting.
- q Communications Team identifies Medical Director as clinical spokesperson, and VP/FCHN or Marketing/Community Relations Director as media spokesperson.
- q Release internal statement that all public statements must be routed through the Communications Team or the PIO.
- q Statement from FCHN president for the local community within 48 hours of a declaration of Level II or III. Statement should express:
 - Expression of empathy with people's worries and fears
 - Confirmation of known facts and action steps FCHN is taking

- Description of what we do not know at this point
 - Steps we are taking to address the unknowns and our constant contact with state and federal officials.
 - Statement of our commitment to be here for the long term and do all we can
 - Where people can get information (the flu hotline) and what they can do to be ready
- q Train FHA and HCC on messages for hotline response. Hotline will focus on repeating key messages and linking callers with services in the community using The Community Connector (<http://www.thecommunityconnector.org/>). HCC nurse manager will provide feedback on community issues and discussion on the hotline.
 - q Role of pandemic flu hotline workers (also see Education Plan):
 - Refer callers to appropriate resources in Franklin County or in their own county.
 - Report to Franklin Emergency Management Agency (EMA) and others where resources are needed and where they are unavailable.
 - Monitor call volume and the topic of questions.
 - Screen people with medical complaints.
 - Do not provide direct services.
 - q Notify the medical community of the purpose of the hotline.
 - q Contact the Health Leaders Forum and remind them to create their own plans. Alert them to FCHN Pandemic Plan.
 - q HCC and community relations will use Maine CDC information on prevention of transmission and management of flu symptoms to produce public service announcements, newspaper articles, website notices, and other media.
 - q Weekly briefings for FCHN staff are provided via NetNews.
 - q Webmaster constructs template/code for pandemic flu page on FCHN website.
 - q FCHN Website features information on flu issues and what people can do to prepare.
 - q Link FCHN website to Maine CDC website.

Maine Levels II & III

(Evidence of pandemic flu in the United States)

- q Notify employees of the State's declaration of the current pandemic level via Outlook and Meditech.
- q Communications Team meets every other day.
- q Reroute hotline to HCC and have partial staff and volunteer deployment from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. to staff the hotline.
- q Issue public statement by FCHN spokesperson, following same format as above, in Maine Levels II & III, pandemic flu outside the United States. Coordinate with local EOC.
- q Convene Health Leaders Forum and go over key messages, strategies, and the pandemic flu plan for FCHN and the entire community.
- q Communications team conducts web surveillance on rumors and works to quell them.
- q Distribute flu kits to ER, Occupational Health, and ambulance bases.

Maine Levels II & III

(Evidence of pandemic flu in local area)

- q See steps outlined in Maine Level IV.

Maine Level IV

(Increased and sustained transmission in the general population)

- q Notify employees of the State’s declaration of the current pandemic level via Outlook and Meditech.
- q Post door signs (see Facility Access Plan) as per direction of Pandemic Influenza Response Team through Incident Command System.
- q Communications Team meets daily.
- q Full staff and volunteer deployment on hotline. Immuno-compromised employees also are deployed to help answer hotline calls 24/7. Nurse manager at HCC coordinates schedule for hotline workers.
- q Notify medical community of the current hotline coverage.
- q Issue public statement by FCHN spokesperson, following same format as in Maine Levels II & III (pandemic flu outside the United States) above. Coordinate with local EOC.
- q Daily check-ins with communications officer lists at colleague agencies.
- q Daily briefings with message: empathy, current situation and numbers, what is not known, what we are doing to address unknowns, what people should do:
 - All FCHN staff (special edition of Net News) via Meditech and Outlook.
 - Public via radio at noon and 5 p.m.
 - Print media releases with updates
 - Website
- q HCC and FHA flu hotline staff and volunteers will be linking people to community support, developing community education materials, and reporting to FCHN on community feedback, detecting “mixed messages” and rumors.

Post-Pandemic Period (Maine Level V)

(Evidence of influenza activity returned to pre-pandemic level)

- q Notify employees of the State’s declaration of the current pandemic level via Outlook and Meditech.
- q Notify FCHN employees when it is safe to return to work.
- q Notify general community through the above communication methods of:
 - the State’s declaration of the current pandemic level
 - FCHN’s return to pre-pandemic operations, when appropriate
 - risk of second wave.
- q Consider producing a narrative of the events of the pandemic period.