

NONMEDICAL PANDEMIC INFLUENZA INCIDENT ANNEX

INTRODUCTION

Severe influenza pandemics represent one of the greatest potential threats to the public's health. Pandemic influenza (pan flu) refers to a worldwide epidemic due to a new, dramatically different strain of influenza virus. A pandemic virus strain can spread rapidly from person to person and, if severe, can cause high levels of disease and death around the world.

A pandemic outbreak could jeopardize essential community services by causing high levels of absenteeism in critical positions in every workforce. It is likely that vaccines against the new virus will not be available for six to eight months following the emergence of the virus. Basic services, such as health care, law enforcement, fire, emergency response, communications, transportation, and utilities, could be disrupted during a pandemic. Finally, the pandemic, unlike many other emergency events, could last for several weeks, if not months.

Purpose

The purpose of this annex is to provide support to Regional Disaster Plan (RDP) signatories regarding mitigation, preparedness, response and recovery from a pandemic. This annex describes the non-medical support that King County Office of Emergency Management (KC OEM) will provide to Public Health Seattle King County (PHSKC), King County government, and RDP signatories.

PHSKC is focused on the community's emergency public health response to a pandemic and is supported by Emergency Support Function 8 (Health and Medical Services) to the RDP. KC OEM is focused on the consequence of a pandemic in terms of Continuity of Government for King County agencies, Continuity of Operations within the region, and RDP partner status.

The need for coordination of non-medical selected logistics, assistance in public information and education, and the acquiring of information on the status of county government, tribal nations, private and public businesses, non-government organizations, selected critical infrastructure entities, cities and special purpose districts will be facilitated by KC OEM based on the phase, needs, and impact of a pandemic. A pandemic will create a situation in which non-traditional procedures and response efforts will be required.

Specifically, the purposes of this annex are to:

- Support public information dissemination specifically related to Pan Flu
- Support public education initiatives

- Provide specialized logistical support and staffing as needed.

During a pandemic, RDP Signatories will use this annex to support the following goals:

- Moderate the impact of illnesses and deaths
- Minimize social disruption
- Minimize economic losses

This annex will be coordinated with other response plans and activities.

Scope

This is an annex of the RDP and its focus is on non-medical planning and response. For detailed medical information, planning and response information, reference *Emergency Support Function 8: Public Health & Medical Services* in the RDP as it provides a broad description of the responsibilities, authorities, and actions associated with public health emergencies.

This annex primarily focuses on the roles, responsibilities, and suggested activities of RDP signatories in support of a regional response to a pandemic. It is expected that RDP signatories will develop and incorporate procedures and protocols addressing influenza preparedness and response activities into their emergency response plans.

POLICIES

RDP Signatories need to maintain a proactive strategy for dealing with a potential flu pandemic. Given how quickly a novel virus will spread and its likely impact on humans, a purely reactive strategy would produce little if any mitigation and only adversely affect response and recovery. The cornerstones of the RDP's strategy are as follows:

- **Preparedness and Communication:** Activities that should be undertaken before a pandemic to ensure preparedness, and the communication of roles and responsibilities to all levels of RDP signatories. This places a premium on sound internal and external communications strategies and education programs.
- **Surveillance and Detection:** Domestic and international systems that provide continuous "situational awareness" need to be developed and monitored to ensure the earliest warning possible to protect the population and monitor essential services.
- **Response and Containment:** Timely and appropriate actions will be required to limit the spread of the outbreak and to mitigate the health, social and economic impacts of a pandemic.

ASSUMPTIONS

An influenza pandemic will result in the rapid spread of infection with outbreaks throughout the world. Communities across the State and the country may be impacted simultaneously. Government at all levels in the State of Washington (local, tribal, state and federal) will proclaim and/or declare a pandemic flu disaster. The number of ill people requiring outpatient medical care and hospitalization will likely overwhelm the local health care system.

There could be significant disruption of public and privately owned critical infrastructure including utilities, transportation, commerce, public safety, agriculture and communications.

Social distancing strategies aimed at reducing the spread of infection such as closing schools, community centers, and other public gathering points and canceling public events may be implemented during a pandemic. The decision to close must be made and coordinated jointly by health officers, elected officials and tribal leaders. Closure decisions may affect RDP signatories both directly (diminished staff capacity) and indirectly (decreased availability of services and supplies).

It will be important to coordinate pandemic response strategies throughout counties in the Puget Sound area and the State due to the regional mobility of the population.

Due to the impact and duration of a pandemic, RDP signatories may not be able to rely on mutual aid resources, Washington State, or federal assistance to support response and recovery efforts. The pandemic response and recovery activities of RDP signatories may be limited by:

- A shortage of medications, trained response personnel, hospital capacity, and medical supplies and equipment due to the cumulative effects of the pandemic.
- Delay or reduced performance of critical infrastructure, due to the anticipated reduction in work force created by a pandemic.
- Large numbers of infected people will stress all resource systems particularly EMS, medical centers and hospitals, morgue capacities, labs, responders, non-governmental organizations and the business community.
- A vaccine for the pandemic influenza strain may not be available for six to eight months following the emergence of a novel virus.

CONCEPT OF OPERATIONS

The King County Emergency Coordination Center (KC ECC) will be the focal point of King County's non-medical response and recovery to a pandemic flu event. Prior to a pandemic declaration, RDP signatories are expected to plan for pandemic flu mitigation and preparedness activities. When activated for a flu pandemic, the King County ECC will include selected representatives of King County departments, support agencies, and selected RDP signatories, governmental and selected businesses and infrastructure owners.

Activation of the King County ECC for a flu pandemic will require the use of non-traditional procedures in comparison with other disasters. Personal protective measures as advised by PHSKC will be implemented, such as social distancing, the use of telecommuting and enhanced communications systems (video conferencing, computer, fax, conference calls, etc.) to reduce the risk of infection to King County ECC representatives and staff.

Prior to and during a pandemic, the King County ECC will be responsible for supporting response with selected logistics, assistance in public information and education, the acquiring of information on the status of county services, critical infrastructure organizations, cities, tribes, special purpose districts and selected businesses. Normal reporting systems (Situation Reports and WebEOC) will be used, as well as a specific flu pandemic operational status report (to be developed), that will allow signatories to report their organizational status based on the impacts of the pandemic.

RESPONSIBILITIES

All RDP signatories are expected to:

- Facilitate pandemic planning and preparedness efforts within their organization.
- Assist PHSKC and KC OEM in educating the public, health care system partners, response partners, businesses, tribes, community based organizations, and elected leaders about influenza pandemics, expected impacts and consequences, and preventive measures.
- Facilitate and participate in education campaigns with employees and key service providers.
- Report operational status to the King County ECC as requested.
- Plan for continuity of operations. Local jurisdictions and signatory partners will determine how they will maintain continuity of operations to direct,

control and coordinate response and recovery within their corporate/organizational boundaries.

King County OEM will:

- Assist PHSKC to educate the public on how to protect themselves from becoming infected and infecting others.
- Assist pandemic planning and preparedness efforts in conjunction with local, tribal, state, and federal response partners.
- Plan and prepare for logistical support of non-medical essentials to PHSKC and regional response stakeholders.
- Conduct training, drills and exercises to enhance regional readiness to respond to a pandemic.
- Coordinate planning and response activities with King County departments, King County ECC representatives, and regional partners.
- Coordinate activation and management of the King County ECC.
- Develop an operational status report that will enable King County departments and critical stakeholders to provide rapid, concise situation reporting to the King County ECC.

PHSKC will:

- Implement and provide support for all health care issues in a flu pandemic as described in ESF-8 Public Health & Medical Services, Pandemic Influenza Response Plan Appendix.
- Identify and communicate health messages and guidance to RDP signatories, county government agencies, regional stakeholders, and the general public.

KC OEM and PHSKC will cooperatively support each other in:

- Providing accurate, timely information to the public and other stakeholders regarding preparations for a pandemic, the impacts of the outbreak, local response actions and disease control recommendations.
- Public education by combining resources to reach all regional stakeholders.

- Public information by using all county Public Information Officers (PIOs), Joint Information Centers (JIC) and regional support systems such as the Regional Public Information Network (RPIN).
- Identification of non-medical resource requirements in a timely manner.
- Jointly planning and participating in selected flu pandemic training and exercises.