



# HHS Pandemic Influenza Leadership Forum

## Convening America's Leaders

### **Join the Conversation:**

#### **The Pandemic Flu Leadership Blog**

[www.blog.pandemicflu.gov](http://www.blog.pandemicflu.gov)

### **What:**

In conjunction with the pandemic influenza Leadership Forum, the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) is convening the Pandemic Flu Leadership Blog, a five-week-long blog summit about pandemic preparedness at <http://blog.pandemicflu.gov>. This online event is part of an ongoing campaign to help Americans prepare for a potential pandemic and engage U.S. leaders in the challenge of helping others prepare.

### **Who:**

Participant bloggers include some of the nation's most influential leaders within the health, community, business and faith-based sectors -- as well as leading authorities on pandemic flu. The Pandemic Flu Leadership Blog is open to the public, and comments will be welcomed and encouraged by all who visit the blog.

### **Why:**

The threat of an influenza pandemic is real, and preparing now can save lives later.

- The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and other leading public health experts say there is no if about whether a pandemic will occur, only when it will occur.
- Experts are concerned that the H5N1 virus (avian flu), now causing serious disease in birds and small numbers of people, is changing and could cause a human influenza pandemic.
- An influenza pandemic could start and spread quickly, and be devastating; The U.S. was overwhelmed by the 1918 -1919 pandemic flu, which caused the deaths of at least 675,000 Americans.
- If people take steps now to prepare, they will be better able to slow the spread of disease, and lessen the overall impact of a pandemic to themselves and society

It is not possible to predict with certainty when the next flu pandemic will occur or how severe it will be, but the time to plan is now.

### **How:**

The pandemic-focused blog summit gives national leaders an opportunity to join a critical and ongoing conversation about the potential impact of a pandemic and the role they can play to encourage others to prepare now. Over the course of the five-week summit, participating bloggers will comment on specific questions related to the threat of a pandemic in the United States and the need to encourage and help others prepare. Participants are discussing the challenges they face and providing their individual ideas for what can be done to help their employees, constituents, customers, congregations and clients prepare.

Ideas and dialogue generated during the blog summit will contribute to HHS' Pandemic Influenza Leadership Forum, an event which will bring approximately 80 U.S. leaders together at a meeting in Washington, D.C., on June 13. The online conversation will continue after the Leadership Forum is over, as bloggers discuss successful mobilization and next steps towards preparedness.

The blog summit was chosen as an innovative and efficient platform for bringing leaders together for an extended discussion regarding pandemic preparedness. HHS is one of the first government agencies to utilize the participatory nature of the Internet to create a dialogue around a specific issue or campaign. This effort to engage individuals in an online conversation is one of many steps HHS will be taking to encourage Americans to personally prepare for a pandemic.

**When:**

The Pandemic Flu Leadership Blog launched on May 22 at <http://blog.pandemicflu.gov> (three weeks prior to the Leadership Forum) and will continue for two weeks following the leadership forum.

- May 22 -- June 12 | Blog Summit, Phase I
- June 13 -- Leadership Forum, Washington, DC.
- June 13 -- June 27 | Blog Summit, Phase II

Join the conversation at <http://blog.pandemicflu.gov>.

*The views expressed on the site by non-federal government bloggers and commentators do not necessarily reflect the official views of the Department of Health and Human Services or the Federal Government.*