

XXII. Sample Newsletter Article – How to Get Involved

Flu Pandemic Preparedness—Your Leadership Is Needed

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), and other leading health experts agree that the threat of a flu pandemic is real and urge all levels of society to prepare. A flu (influenza) pandemic is an outbreak of a new flu virus that spreads around the world. The virus will spread easily from person to person, mostly through coughing and sneezing. Because the virus is new to people, everyone will be at risk of getting it.

Pandemics have occurred repeatedly throughout history. The most severe—the flu pandemic of 1918—was responsible for over 50 million deaths worldwide and affected roughly one-fifth of the world’s population. Now, experts are concerned that the H5N1 virus (bird flu) is changing and could cause the next human flu pandemic.

If a pandemic of similar severity to that of 1918 were to occur today, estimates are that 90 million Americans could become ill, and nearly 2 million could die. In addition to the dramatic human toll, a flu pandemic poses a major threat to the global economy.

The government alone cannot prepare the nation for a pandemic. Our position in the community gives us a unique, powerful “voice” for spreading the word about this threat. Our leadership is essential in encouraging our group’s “families” to prepare now to ensure that both they and their loved ones are ready to withstand a flu pandemic.

Preparation now, before an outbreak, could reduce sickness, death, and failed businesses. There are specific steps to help our group get prepared. Simple actions will help, such as encouraging our group to stock up on supplies to make it easier to stay at home, and to practice proper hand washing.

Government leaders at HHS and CDC are asking employers, faith-based leaders, community leaders, and medical professionals to use their influence to inform Americans of the threat a pandemic poses and to encourage preparedness. Resources are available to help you communicate this information quickly and accurately.

Help spread the word. Go to www.takethelead.pandemicflu.gov to learn more about pandemic preparedness and your role.

This information is brought to you by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services

