

Biological Event Monitoring Team Pandemic Planning for the Department of Energy

The Department of Energy (DOE) established the Biological Event Monitoring Team (BEMT) to ensure Department readiness in the event of a pandemic or other biological threat. The Chief Health, Safety and Security Officer, Glenn Podonsky has primary responsibility for the BEMT, which provides medical, epidemiologic, and public health expertise to the Department. The National Nuclear Security Administration (NNSA), responsible for the Department's Continuity of Operations (COOP), provides advice and direction on COOP activities related to pandemic planning. In addition, the BEMT includes representatives from the Office of the Chief Information Officer, Office of Management, Office of the Chief Human Capital Officer, General Counsel, Science, Environmental Management, Fossil Energy, Intelligence and Counter Intelligence, and Electricity Delivery and Energy Reliability.

The BEMT Executive Steering Group provides direction and reviews work products and priorities of BEMT on matters involving the health of DOE Federal and contractor employees. The HSS Deputy Chief for Operations, William Eckroade, and the NNSA Deputy Advisor, Carl S. Pavetto, co-chair the BEMT Executive Steering Group. The DOE Chief Medical Officer, Michael J. Ardaiz, serves as an advisor to the steering group. Senior Epidemiologist, Bonnie Richter, chairs the BEMT Working Group on Pandemic Influenza.

The BEMT supports the following four main functions outlined in the National Strategy: (1) ensures the safety and well-being of the Department's workforce; (2) ensures the Department's continuing performance and mission-essential functions; (3) supports the Federal response to a pandemic or other outbreak; and (4) communicates with stakeholders.

Given the unanticipated scenario with the H1N1 influenza virus, the BEMT continues to work on its pandemic planning on behalf of the entire Department. Implementation of the plan by all DOE elements and by individual employees is essential to ensure the protection of the DOE workforce and the continued performance of the Department's essential functions in the event of a pandemic.