



HORIZON SCHOOL DIVISION #205

"A Community of Learning and Achieving"



PANDEMIC INFLUENZA PLAN

August 13, 2009

Credits:

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Pandemic Planning

1. What is the risk?

1.1. Seasonal Influenza vs. Pandemic Influenza – What is the difference?

There are three types of influenza viruses, but only Type A and Type B cause significant disease in humans. Type A influenza viruses mutate frequently and cause local outbreaks and regional epidemics during influenza season each year. Both Type A and Type B influenza viruses can cause seasonal influenza, but only Type A viruses can cause pandemic influenza. A person may be infected by these viruses multiple times throughout his or her life, thus developing some form of immunity against the slightly changed viruses. In an average year there are between 12 and 50 deaths from influenza in Saskatchewan.

A pandemic means an epidemic of any disease over a wide geographic area affecting a large proportion of the population. Pandemic influenza occurs when a major new subtype of influenza virus appears against which the entire human population has little or no immunity. It spreads rapidly and widely, and causes more severe disease and more deaths than a seasonal influenza. Pandemic influenza has occurred on average about once every 30 – 40 years since 16th century, with the last pandemic hitting almost 40 years ago. In the last century, there were three influenza pandemics:

- The Spanish Flu in 1918-1919 killed an estimated 30,000 to 50,000 people in Canada and 20 – 40 million people worldwide;
- Asian Flu in 1957-1958 resulted in about one million deaths worldwide;
- Hong Kong Flu in 1968 -1969 killed less than one million people worldwide.

The Saskatchewan Ministry of Health's Public Pandemic Influenza Plan states that "It is not possible to predict when the next influenza pandemic will occur or how serious its impact will be. However, since there may be little warning, the federal government, Saskatchewan Health, the Regional Health Authorities, and municipal governments along with other governments and agencies around the world are preparing to respond when the next pandemic arrives".

1.2. Worst-case assumptions are:

- The next pandemic virus will arrive in Canada within three months after it emerges in another part of the world.
- The first peak of illness in Canada will occur two to four months after that.
- A pandemic will have more than one wave and each wave will last likely six to eight weeks.
- Between 15% and 35% of the population will be affected. For Saskatchewan the Ministry of Health's estimates are:
 - 150,000 – 350,000 people could become clinically ill;
 - 60,000 – 160,000 people could require outpatient care;
 - 1,000 to 2,800 people could require hospitalization;
 - 300 to 1,000 could die from influenza or complications of influenza.
- There is potential for 50 % absenteeism for 2 weeks during the height of the most severe wave.
- Absenteeism will be a result of both employee illness and family-care needs
- There is no immediate medical remedy, anticipate 4 to 6 months for a vaccine.

2. What is the anticipated impact on Education Continuity?

Worst case impacts include:

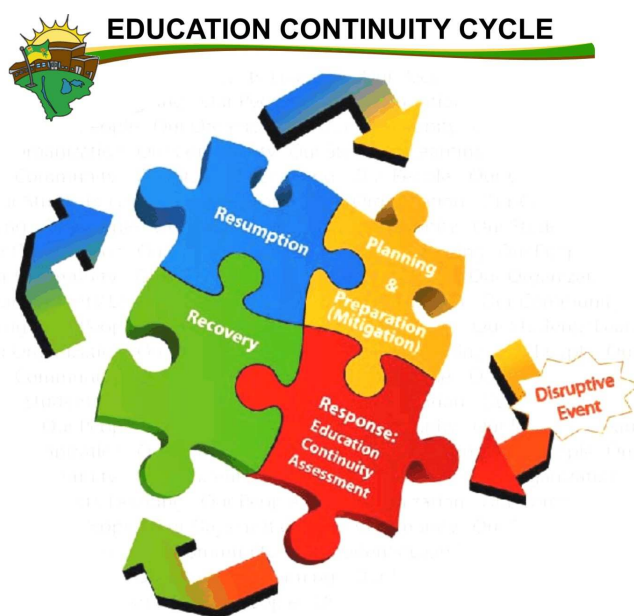
- Reduced employee pool, including our regular employees or availability of temporary employees or subcontractors;
- Cancelled client service requests;
- Interruptions in delivery of supplies or materials (especially goods that go through international borders and customs);
- Changes in technology use, for example increased internet and telephone use;
- Reduction or restrictions on public meetings or gatherings;
- Restrictions on travel (regional, national or international);
- Reduced availability of health care or home care services; and
- Disruptions in other essential services such as telecommunications, financial/banking services, water, power (hydro), gasoline/fuels, medicine, or the food supply.

3. Why may the Health Region prevent public gatherings and close schools?

During the 1957-1958 pandemic, the World Health Organization (WHO) found that spread of the pandemic influenza within some countries followed public gatherings, such as conferences and festivals. They also observed that in many countries, the pandemic broke out first in camps, army units and schools.

Closure of schools may be particularly effective in an influenza pandemic because of the role children play in spreading influenza. Also, during the first wave of the Asian influenza pandemic of 1957-1958, the highest attack rates were in school-aged children.

Schools will not however, be automatically closed. The working expectation is that schools will continue to operate and provide an environment that is as safe as possible during a pandemic. The Ministry of Health, the Emergency Measures Organization, and the Ministry of Education, in Saskatchewan have the authority to close schools for health emergency response or educational reasons respectively. The working expectation is that decisions about school closure will remain a local responsibility as much as possible. The possibility of school closure is a key reason for engaging in business and educational continuity planning.



4. What are the Pandemic Phases and the Public Health Goals and Horizon School Division Education Continuity Goals?

Pandemic Phase	Public Health Goals	Horizon School Division Education Continuity Goals
Inter-Pandemic Period		
Phase 1 No new influenza virus subtypes have been detected in Humans.	Strengthen influenza pandemic preparedness at the global, regional, national and sub-national levels.	Strengthen influenza pandemic preparedness at the Division and school level.
Phase 2 No new influenza virus subtypes have been detected in humans. However, a circulating animal influenza virus subtype poses a substantial risk of human disease.	Minimize the risk of transmission to humans; detect and report such transmission rapidly if it occurs.	Minimize the risk of transmission to employees and students. Monitor animal influenza outbreaks and educate employees and students on preventative measures.
Pandemic Alert Period		
Phase 3 Human infections with a new subtype but no human-to-human spread. Or at most rare instances of spread to a close contact.	Ensure rapid characterization of the new virus subtype and early detection, notification, and response to additional cases.	Minimize the risk of transmission to employees and students. Monitor influenza outbreaks in the Division and schools: educate employees and students on preventative measures.
Phase 4 Small cluster(s) with limited human-to-human transmission but spread is highly localized, suggesting that the virus is not well adapted to humans.	Contain the new virus within limited foci or delay spread to gain time to implement preparedness measures, including vaccine development.	
Phase 5 Larger cluster(s) but human-to-human spread still localized, suggesting that the virus is becoming increasingly better adapted to humans, but may not yet be fully transmissible (substantial pandemic risk).	Maximize efforts to contain or delay spread, to possibly avert a pandemic and to gain time to implement pandemic response measures.	Work with Health Regions to contain Work with Health Regions to contain new viruses. Implement pandemic response measures and delay spread. Activate Horizon Education Continuity -Emergency Response procedures.
Pandemic Period		
Phase 6 Pandemic: increased and sustained transmission in the general population.	Minimize the impact of the pandemic.	Minimize the impact of the pandemic: activate the Education Continuity Plan.

5. Why will people be away from work? The anticipated reasons will include:

- Being sick or quarantined (suspected, actual, or post-infectious cases);
- Fulfilling volunteer roles in the community, including helping with emergency services;
- Caring for school aged children (if sick, or in the event schools are closed), or other family members;
- Under mandatory order by public health; and
- Avoiding of public spaces, including gatherings, and avoidance of public transportation.

6. Pandemic Planning

6.1 Health agencies - Roles and Responsibilities

- The federal government holds responsibility for the nationwide coordination of the pandemic influenza health response, including surveillance, international liaison, and coordination of the vaccine response (the way vaccines are obtained, allocated and funded). It is up to the federal government to activate the Canadian Pandemic Influenza Plan once a pandemic is declared.
- Saskatchewan Health has the responsibility for coordinating pandemic influenza planning and mobilizing contingency plans and resources in the province. Health emergency response begins at the local (regional health authority) level. The Saskatchewan Health Pandemic Influenza Preparedness Plan provides a framework for activities to be carried out in each pandemic period.
- Saskatoon Health Region is responsible for planning the local response to a pandemic according to provincial and national guidelines. This includes planning health services delivery and working with local partners (e.g., emergency responders) in advance of a pandemic to ensure a coordinated response when pandemic influenza strikes.

6.2 Pandemic preparedness, response, recovery and resumption activities are components of the Division's Education Continuity Management System and as such the responsibility of the Education Continuity Plan Team.

6.3 Horizon School Division pandemic related objectives are:

- Ensure a safe environment for students and staff (before, during and following a pandemic);
- Minimize the impact of the pandemic on students and staff;
- Remain operational and maintain instruction and services as long as it is safe to do so;
- Ensure essential services continue during a pandemic (e.g.: supervision, curricular requirements, building security);
- Communicate accurately and in a timely manner with management, staff, and students and families regarding operations before, during and after a pandemic period; and
- Track and monitor the activities and additional costs of responding to the pandemic.
- Respond to outside needs, if required, as determined by the Health Region or City.

Horizon School Division Education Continuity responses to a Pandemic Influenza

Please note: For information regarding action planned while in Phase 1 or Phase 2 please refer to the chart on page 4.

7. Phase 3 (Pandemic Alert Period) - Preparation and mitigation activities

7.1 Horizon School Division Goals during this phase are:

- Educate employees and students on preventative measures;
- Minimize the risk of transmission to employees and students;
- Monitor influenza and infectious disease outbreaks in the Division and schools; and
- Prepare for Pandemic Phases 4, 5 and 6 by refining Education Continuity responses.

7.2 The Education Continuity Team Leader is the designated Horizon School Division Pandemic Coordinator. The HR representative of the ECM Team is the designated Horizon School Division Leader for Epidemic / Pandemic preparedness.

7.3 The Education Continuity Team Responsibilities include:

- Coordination of Division and school influenza prevention efforts;
- Educating employees and students on preventative measures;
- Monitoring and tracking the health status of students and employees;
- Identifying and reporting an influenza / epidemic / infectious disease outbreak in the Division or schools;
- Coordinating Horizon liaison and communications with the Health Regions and municipalities; and
- Coordinating Division and school cleaning and sanitizing prevention efforts.

7.4 Current Horizon School Division Administrative Procedures will be referred to and implemented during this pandemic preparedness and mitigation period. The Education Continuity Management Team, led by HR will review the following Administrative Procedures and develop Pandemic specific procedures as appropriate.

7.5 School Emergency Management Teams are responsible for:

- Implementation of school influenza prevention efforts;
- Educating employees and students on preventative measures;
- Monitoring and tracking the health status of students and employees;
- Identifying and reporting an influenza / epidemic / infectious disease outbreak in the schools;
- Monitoring school cleaning and sanitizing prevention efforts; and
- Communicating and emphasizing the need for good personal hygiene practices, such as covering the nose and mouth when sneezing and coughing, good hand washing / hand hygiene practices, and workplace cleaning habits to minimize influenza transmission.

8. Phase 4 (Pandemic Alert Period) – Small Cluster Mitigation activities

8.1 Horizon School Division Goals during this phase are:

- Work with the Health Regions to contain new viruses.
- Implement education continuity and pandemic response measures.

8.2 When a small cluster(s) of a virus with limited human-to-human transmission is reported by a Health Region(s) or identified by Horizon School Division the following are the anticipated Education Continuity Team escalation and response activities:

- Monitor and report the status of pandemic affected essential activities and capabilities.
- Report unusual absenteeism rates to the Health Regions' Public Health Services.
- Implement procedures to communicate with staff to promote confidence in the workplace.
- Implement procedures to minimize illness among staff and visitors, including restricting workplace entry of people with influenza symptoms, increase social distancing (e.g. enable tele-working, avoid face-to-face contact) and management of staff who become ill at work.
- Implement additional workplace cleaning measures to minimize the transmission of the virus through environmental sources, particularly hard surfaces such as sinks, handles, railings, objects and counters.
- Implement procedures for ensuring that adequate supplies of hand hygiene products are available.
- Increase stock levels to prepare for extended pandemic related delays in supply delivery.
- Implement procedures for contact tracing where staff become ill at work.
- Implement procedure for recovered staff members to return to work.

8.3 School Emergency Management Teams escalation and response activities are anticipated to include:

- Reporting of staff and student absenteeism.
- Reporting of staff and students becoming ill at work.
- Implementing procedures to communicate with staff to promote confidence in the workplace.
- Implementing procedures to minimize illness among staff and visitors, including restricting workplace entry of people with influenza symptoms, increase social distancing (e.g. enable teleworking, avoid face to face contact) and management of staff who become ill at work.
- Implementing additional workplace cleaning measures to minimize the transmission of the virus through environmental sources, particularly hard surfaces such as sinks, handles, railings, objects and counters.

9. Phase 5 (Pandemic Alert Period) - Large Cluster mitigation activities

9.1 Horizon School Division Goals during this phase are:

- Work with Health Regions to contain and delay the spread of the virus.
- Activate Horizon Emergency Response procedures to safeguard personal life and safety at all times.
- Implement Education Continuity and pandemic response measures.

9.2 When a large cluster(s) of a virus with limited human to human localized transmission, indicating a substantial pandemic risk is reported by Health Region(s) or identified by Horizon School Division the following are the anticipated Education Continuity Team escalation and response activities:

- Activate the Education Continuity Management and Leadership Teams as required.
- Activate liaison and communications links with Health Regions.
- Monitor and assess the status of affected essential activities and capabilities.
- Assess the impact and develop recommendations for:
 - closing of buildings
 - implementing and communicating program cancellations,
 - implementation of amendments to HR benefit programs such as the definition of absenteeism, sick leave criteria, time off and vacation,
 - changes to travel policies,
 - changes to flexible work hour and alternate workplace policies.
- Report unusual absenteeism rates to Health Regions' Public Health Services.
- Identify core people and skills required to keep the essential activities running and ensure there are sufficient back ups for people and skills if there is a high level of absence.
- Implement procedures to communicate with staff, students and the community.
- Implement procedures to minimize illness among staff and visitors, including;
 - restricting workplace entry of people with influenza symptoms,
 - social distancing; and
 - care of staff and students who become ill at work.
- Implement additional workplace cleaning measures to minimize the transmission of the virus through environmental sources, particularly hard surfaces such as sinks, handles, railings, objects and counters.
- Implement procedures for ensuring that adequate supplies of hand hygiene products are available.
- Increase stock levels to prepare for extended pandemic related delays in supply delivery.
- Implement procedures for contact tracing where staff become ill at work.
- Implement procedures for recovered staff members to return to work.
- Implement procedures for restricting travel and visits to affected locations and / or schools.

9.3 School Emergency Management Teams escalation and response activities are anticipated to include:

- Reporting of staff and student absentees.
- Reporting of staff and students becoming ill at work.
- Implementing procedures to communicate with staff to promote confidence in the workplace.
- Implementing procedures to minimize illness among staff and visitors, including restricting workplace entry of people with influenza symptoms, increase social distancing (e.g. enable teleworking, avoid face to face contact) and management of staff who become ill at work.
- Implementing additional workplace cleaning measures to minimize the transmission of the virus through environmental sources, particularly hard surfaces such as sinks, handles, railings, objects and counters.

10. Phase 6 (Pandemic Period) – Education Continuity Plan Activation

10.1 Horizon School Division Goals during this phase are:

- Work with Health Regions to minimize the impact of the pandemic.
- Activate Horizon School Division Emergency Response procedures to safeguard personal life and safety at all times.
- Invoke Education Continuity and pandemic response plans.

10.2 When a Pandemic has been declared by the Health Region the following are the anticipated Education Continuity Team escalation and response activities:

- Activate the Education Continuity Management and Leadership Teams.
- Activate liaison and communications links with Health Regions.
- Monitor and assess the status of affected essential activities and capabilities.
- Invoke / activate the Education Continuity Plan as required.
- Confirm or amend the established priority order of essential activity recovery, resumption or suspension.
- Confirm the core people and skills required to keep the essential activities running and adjust staffing if there is a high level of absence.
- Re-assign personnel as needed to ensure the continuation of essential activities.
- Assess the impact and submit recommendations for:
 - closing of buildings,
 - implementing and communicating program cancellations,
 - implementing amendments to HR benefit programs such as the definition of absenteeism, sick leave criteria, time off and vacation,
 - changes to travel policies,
 - changes to flexible work hour and alternate workplace policies.
- Initiate alternative education delivery solutions such as:
 - combine similar grades. Student absenteeism will likely reduce class sizes,
 - provide alternate activities that can be accommodated by fewer teaching staff,
 - temporarily combine schools,
 - continue instruction for students who are home and well enough to do school work including homework and/or virtual instruction on the Internet with phone contact,
 - Saturday classes or vacation school when conditions improve to make up for lost instruction time.

- Implement the practice of students and staff staying at home, even with minor symptoms (ex: combat the phenomenon labeled “presenteeism”).
- Implement measures to minimize or slow the transmission of influenza. Examples of measures that may be introduced are:
 - reducing visitors to the school,
 - reducing the number and duration of face to face meetings or number of persons in attendance,
 - postponing events that are open to the public and/or parents, including travel for interschool activities, and
 - increasing distance education and work at home options.
- Report absenteeism rates to Health Regions’ Public Health Services.
- Communicate the notification of service reduction / cancellation to education stakeholders, employees, students, the community, the media,
- Consider procedures for providing employee pandemic support and coordinate ongoing crisis support through the employee and family assistance programs.
- Consider procedures for providing support to employees during and after the event, including time off, pay and benefits and compensation.
- Coordinate, with Health Region the responsibility, authority and process for infected site inspections, cleanup and repairs.
- Coordinate, with Health Region the authority and process for re-occupying previously infected sites.

10.3 School Emergency Management Teams escalation and response activities are anticipated to include:

- Reporting of staff and student absenteeism.
- Reporting of staff and students becoming ill at work.
- Implementing procedures to communicate with staff to promote confidence in the workplace.
- Implementing procedures to minimize illness among staff and visitors, including restricting workplace entry of people with influenza symptoms, increase social distancing (e.g. enable teleworking, avoid face to face contact) and management of staff who become ill at work.
- Implementing additional workplace cleaning measures to minimize the transmission of the virus through environmental sources, particularly hard surfaces such as sinks, handles, railings, objects and counters.

11. This plan addresses the Education Continuity Cycle component of “Planning and Preparation” and “Response”. For information about the “Recovery and Resumption” phases, please refer to Horizon School Division Education Continuity Plan.

12. Pandemic Information Resources:

Saskatchewan Health

www.health.gov.sk.ca/pandemicinfluenzaplan

www.health.gov.sk.ca/influenzamonitor

Government of Canada

www.influenza.gc.ca

World Health Organization (WHO)

www.who.int/csr/disease/avian_influenza/en

Saskatoon Health Region

www.saskatoonhealthregion.ca/pandemic/pandemic_home.htm

Public Health Agency of Canada

<http://www.phacaspc.gc.ca/indexeng.php>

Ministry of Education:

<http://www.health.gov.sk.ca/Default.aspx?DN=351caf7c-af8c-46ba-892b-2f9ab5e2489b>