

Pandemic Preparedness Guide For Medical Offices and Clinics

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Introduction:

The *Pandemic Preparedness Guide for Medical Offices and Clinics* is a user-friendly tool to help medical practices through the process of creating an emergency preparedness and business continuity plan for a pandemic influenza outbreak. The document is derived from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Business Checklist¹ and the CDC Checklist for Medical Practices². This guide is used in conjunction with the *Pandemic Preparedness Plan Template* and together provides medical practices with an overall planning structure with the necessary information and resources needed to complete the template and develop an effective Pandemic Preparedness Plan. A properly developed business continuity plan is specific to each individual business and requires a considerable investment of time and effort by the planner to be effective. *CIP Consulting, Inc* is not responsible for the development, implementation, or execution of individual plans using these materials.

This guide incorporates fundamental business continuity planning (BCP) concepts tailored to medical offices and clinics and focuses on widely-accepted preparedness, prevention, and recovery/response capabilities. These BCP concepts define a planning structure to prepare medical offices and clinics for a pandemic influenza outbreak. This guide while focused primarily on a potential pandemic influenza event can be the basis for comprehensive emergency preparedness and business continuity from naturally-occurring and man-made disasters and other community medical emergencies.

The structure of the document is as follows: In Section 1, the planning framework is developed and generic business continuity resource information is collected. For general emergency situations, this section documents information that decision makers need to effectively prepare, respond, and recover from disruptions and disasters. Potential workforce impacts resulting from a pandemic influenza event and strategies to limit their effects are analyzed in Section 2. Relevant workforce policies required during a pandemic event are described in Section 3. Emergency procedures and decision criteria used during a pandemic event are outlined in Section 4. Sections 5 and 6 address internal communications and effective coordination with external groups, respectively. Surveilling and reporting the spread of an infectious disease in a community is addressed in Section 7. Triage and infection control policies for protecting staff and patient health during a disease outbreak are outlined in Section 8 along with comprehensive resources on infection control guidelines that are available on-line. General operational guidance to restore and reconstitute normal medical services following a pandemic event is developed in Section 9 and completes the *Pandemic Preparedness Guide*.

When using the *Pandemic Preparedness Guide*, the reader is encouraged to examine and access other pertinent information referenced in this document that can be found online. An extensive body of knowledge is available to assist planners in developing an effective preparedness plan in the event that a serious pandemic influenza event occurs including the American Academy of Family Physicians Foundation *Physician Resources*³.

¹ See www.pandemicflu.gov/plan/workplaceplanning/businesschecklist.html (May 31, 2007)

² See www.pandemicflu.gov/plan/healthcare/medical.html (May 31, 2007)

³ See www.aafp.org/online/en/home/clinical/disasterprep/pandemicflu/mdresources.html

Table of Contents

- 1. Basic Preparedness Plan Information: 5**
 - 1.1 Delegation of Authority: 5*
 - 1.2 Plan Coordination and Approval: 5*
 - 1.3 Integration with Existing Emergency Plans: 5*
 - 1.4 Medical Office Pandemic Planning Committee: 6*
 - 1.5 Essential and Nonessential Personnel: 6*
 - 1.6 Medical Supplies and Pharmaceuticals: 6*
 - 1.7 Ancillary and Backup Personnel: 8*
 - 1.9 Onsite or Offsite Resource Availability: 9*
 - 1.10 Medical Workload and Workforce Impacts: 10*
 - 1.11 Emergency Communications Plans: 11*
 - 1.12 Training and Exercises: 12*
- 2 Assessing the Impact of Pandemic Influenza on your Practice: 13**
 - 2.1 Forecast Potential Employee and Family Constraints: 13*
 - 2.2 Workplace Social Distancing Guidelines: 13*
 - 2.3 Annual Influenza Mitigation Programs and Procedures: 14*
 - 2.4 Workforce Incentives: 14*
 - 2.5 Mental Health and Social Service Providers: 14*
 - 2.6 Staff with Special Needs or Risk Factors: 15*
- 3 Emergency/Pandemic Workplace Policies and Decision Criteria: 15**
 - 3.1 Establish or Modify Existing Workforce Policies: 15*
 - 3.2 Telecommuting, Alternate Worksites, and Flexible Hours: 16*
 - 3.3 Electronic Medical Records and Medical Practice Data: 16*
 - 3.4 Business Function Infection Prevention Policies: 17*
 - 3.5 Healthy Workplace Policies: 17*
 - 3.6 Emergency Policy Activation: 17*
 - 3.7 Decision Criteria for Reducing or Terminating Medical Operations: 18*
- 4 Resources to Protect your Staff: 19**
 - 4.1 Infection Control Supplies for Staff Use: 19*
 - 4.2 Quantify Increased Capacity for Infrastructure Services: 19*
 - 4.3 Emergency Information Dissemination and Communication: 20*
- 5 Staff Awareness and Internal Communications: 20**
 - 5.1 Pandemic Preparedness Fundamentals: 20*
 - 5.2 Focused Pandemic Information for Medical Offices: 21*

5.3 *Internal Sharing of Plan Information* 22

6 Communication and Coordination with External Organizations: 22

6.1 *External Communications Point of Contact:* 22

6.2 *Collaborate with other Pandemic Planning Efforts:* 22

6.3 *Coordinate with Federal, State, and Local Groups:* 23

6.4 *Share Medical Asset Information:* 23

6.5 *Share Best Practices with Others:* 23

7 Disease Surveillance and Reporting: 23

7.1 *Monitor Public Health Advisories:* 24

7.2 *Develop Surveillance and Reporting Systems:* 24

7.3 *Recommended Reporting Procedures for the State of Colorado:* 25

7.4 *Clinical Diagnosis Guidelines:* 25

8 Triage and Infection Control: 26

8.1 *Triage and Management of Patients:* 26

8.2 *Infection Control Plan:* 26

8.3 *Standard Isolation Precautions:* 27

8.4 *Personal Protective Equipment Policy:* 27

8.5 *Develop a Vaccine and Antiviral Use Plan:* 28

9 Recovery and Reconstitution: 30

9.1 *Recovery and Reconstitution of Medical Office Operations:* 30

9.2 *Post-event Workforce Issues:* 30

9.3 *Inventory and Reorder Medical Supplies and Pharmaceuticals:* 30

9.4 *Patient Communications:* 31

9.5 *Revise and Update Planning Assumptions* 31

Appendix 1: Medical Personnel Information Template 32



Getting Started:

The *Pandemic Preparedness Guide for Medical Offices and Clinics* is to be used in conjunction with the *Pandemic Preparedness Plan Template*. The *Guide* leads the Pandemic Coordinator through the planning process and provides relevant information and resources needed to complete *Pandemic Preparedness Plan Template*. The *Guide* provides the general format of the information that is requested and that appears in the *Pandemic Preparedness Plan Template*. The final completed and signed document will be the Medical Practice's *Pandemic Preparedness Plan*. The Pandemic Coordinator should regularly validate the Medical Practice's *Pandemic Preparedness Plan* against the CDC Checklist for Medical Practices⁴ and through frequent pandemic exercises and training courses.

1. Basic Preparedness Plan Information:

This section contains basic plan elements that define the planning process and the medical and business factors that will affect the success of your actions.

1.1 Delegation of Authority:

The physician(s) and/or office manager should delegate authority and responsibility to the Pandemic Coordinator (PC) to design, coordinate, and implement business continuity and pandemic preparedness plans.

Pandemic Coordinator Delegation	Initials	Date
Pandemic Coordinator:		
Physician approval:		
Office Manager approval:		

1.2 Plan Coordination and Approval:

The PC will coordinate and gain approvals from the physician(s) and the office manager on all aspects of plan development including: business continuity and prevention strategies, essential employee designation, business critical functions, workplace and human resource policies, mitigation and infection control procedures, staff communications, and training and exercises.

1.3 Integration with Existing Emergency Plans:

If an existing emergency plan exists, the PC will incorporate pandemic planning elements into the emergency management plan for the organization.

Existing Emergency Plan? (Y/N)	Date of Emergency Plan: ___/___/___
Contact Person:	Contact Information:

⁴ See www.pandemicflu.gov/plan/healthcare/medical.html (May 31, 2007)

1.4 Medical Office Pandemic Planning Committee:

The development of a *Pandemic Preparedness Plan* will require the participation and commitment by select staff members of the practice. Staff members selected should have responsibility for their business function and understand the operations and requirements of the medical practice. These individuals will serve on the Pandemic Planning Committee, be responsible for maintaining the pandemic plans for their business function, and may have specific duties and responsibilities during a pandemic event.

A Medical Office Pandemic Planning Committee may include representatives from the following categories:

Position	Name	Contact Information	Initials
Physician			
Office Manager			
Nursing			
Front Office			
Back Office			
Accounts receivable			
Clinic laboratory			
Environmental or waste management			

1.5 Essential and Nonessential Personnel:

- 1.5.1** Collect employee information using the *Medical Office Personnel Information* form (see Appendix 1 or the *Pandemic Preparedness Plan Template*).
- 1.5.2** Identify essential and non-essential staff using the following criteria:
Essential Personnel: personnel whose positions (medical, business, or support services) must be consistently staffed for the medical practice to safely conduct business (*e.g., physicians, RNs, etc.*). This may include individuals who are able to perform their duties at an alternate location.
Non-essential Personnel: staff that may not be required to come to work during a influenza pandemic and will be notified when they should report back to work.
- 1.5.3** Review and confirm with the physician(s) and office manager the list of essential employee to ensure accuracy and completeness.

1.6 Medical Supplies and Pharmaceuticals:

- 1.6.1** Identify emergency medical supplies/pharmaceuticals and potential suppliers. Plan to stock at least one week's worth of consumables. Do not include any anticipated emergency allocations from state and county health departments.
- 1.6.2** Develop a primary plan and contingency plan to address supply shortages which details procedures for acquisition of supplies through normal channels, as well as requesting resources when normal channel resources have been exhausted.
- 1.6.3** Create a list of all "on-hand" medical supplies and an estimated inventory of medical supplies required for a pandemic or medical emergency. (Note: Not all medical practices will maintain inventories of emergency medical supplies.)