

Pandemic Influenza Plan

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PLANNING OVERVIEW

The Crisis Response Team (CRT) has been charged with developing a plan to respond to the effects that a pandemic flu outbreak would create. The Team was established to ensure that preparedness and response planning occurs for potential threats to the health and well-being of the Red Rocks Community College community and is responsible for the distribution of a Pandemic Influenza Plan.

- The CRT consists of representatives from key areas of the campus most likely to be called for some kind of action, should a pandemic situation arise. The CRT will collaborate with the rest of the campus and the student body, as appropriate.
- The CRT collaborates with local emergency response and public health planners in the establishment and maintenance of the Pandemic Influenza Plan to insure coordination of response and communication with the representative agencies.
- The CRT reviews the Pandemic Influenza Plan at least annually to insure the response planning and program information is current and applicable.
- The CRT helps the campus plan for the provision of sufficient and accessible infection prevention supplies (soap, alcohol based hand hygiene products, tissues and appropriate receptacles).
- The Team will coordinate with the Colorado Health Department to maintain a surveillance mechanism to monitor and communicate substantial increases in absenteeism among students and staff/faculty. In the event of notable increases in absenteeism RRCC will report the information to:
 - RRCC Office of the President, who will then inform:
 - The Office of the President of the Community Colleges System

It is the intent of this plan to identify key important actions RRCC may need to undertake for the preparation of, and response to an influenza outbreak resulting in business interruption. Continued review and updating of the plan will be required to ensure that the Pandemic Influenza Plan effectively addresses the unique needs of RRCC.

BACKGROUND

According to the World Health Organization (WHO), “An influenza pandemic occurs when a new influenza virus appears against which the human population has no immunity, resulting in several simultaneous epidemics worldwide with enormous numbers of deaths and illness. With the increase in global transport and communications, as well as urbanization and overcrowded conditions, epidemics due to the new influenza virus are likely to quickly take hold around the world.”

Influenza is a highly contagious respiratory virus that is responsible for annual epidemics in the United States and other countries. Each year an average of 200,000 people are hospitalized and 36,000 die in the U.S. from influenza infection or a secondary complication. During an influenza pandemic the level of illness and death from influenza will likely increase dramatically worldwide.

The impact of an influenza pandemic on the local economy and business processes could be devastating. It is estimated that 15-35% of the population will be affected. There is a potential for high levels of illness and death, as well as significant disruption to society and our economy, making planning for the next influenza pandemic imperative.

ASSUMPTIONS

Predicted spread and severity:

- Over a several month period, illness rates for population: 15-35%
- Global spread in: 3 months
- Vaccine availability: 6 months after initial outbreak
- Anti-viral treatment: Likely to be in short supply and may not be effective

Potential Effects:

- Large percentages of the population may be unable to work for days to weeks during the pandemic
- Diminished numbers of people and expertise available
- Diminished emergency and essential services – fire, police, and medical
- Potential for mandatory school closures
- Delays in supplies shipments and mail delivery
- Delays in outside service work
- Disruption of utilities repairs and limited potential service losses

School Operational Effects:

Large numbers of staff absent, difficult to maintain school operations

- Loss of services from suppliers (e.g. food service, other essential products)
- Large increase in student absenteeism
- Operational breakdowns of facility and services

PLAN PURPOSE

The purpose of this plan is to assist in managing the impact of an Influenza Pandemic at RRCC. The key goal of this is plan is based on three main strategies:

- I. Reduce the spread of the virus within the campus facilities**
- II. Sustain educational and activity functions**
- III. Sustain facility operational functions**

The plan addresses the following management elements for Pandemic Influenza Plan response which include the following:

- Communication to RRCC from external sources regarding the pandemic virus, and internal communications within RRCC.
- Activities to reduce the spread of the virus:
 - Reducing risk of infected persons (students, staff, visitors) entering the facility
 - Student spacing (reduce person to person interactions) i.e. postponing school events or activities. (also called “social distancing”)
 - Cleaning and disinfecting of facilities
 - Educating students, faculty and staff to address concerns
 - Handling students and employees who become ill at school and those who may have been exposed to the virus at school
- Prevention/Treatment, related information regarding provision of and use of :
 - Influenza vaccine
 - Anti-viral medication
- Continuity of operations
 - Continuance of essential educational functions
 - Maintenance of essential facility operational functions

COMMUNICATION

Pandemic Influenza Communication to Red Rocks Community College

- The Office of the President will disseminate Pandemic Influenza information received from the Community College System office, State Agencies, and other governing authorities to the appropriate RRCC constituencies. Information on Pandemic Influenza will be reviewed by the CRT for potential affect on Red Rocks operational planning and action.
- The CRT will advise the Office of the President of information which can, or does directly influence the operation of RRCC.
- The CRT will monitor information from national, state, and local public safety and health agencies, and will forward pertinent information to the Office of the President as determined to be appropriate by the Team.

- The primary communication channels to be monitored by the Pandemic Influenza Planning Team will be the public health websites.
 - **Jefferson County Department of Environmental Health**
<http://www.co.jefferson.co.us/health/index.htm>
 - **Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment**
<http://www.cdphe.state.co.us/epr/>
 - **U.S. Center for Disease Control**
<http://www.bt.cdc.gov>

Communications to the Public

- RRCC has established a Crisis situation protocol for communications with the public. All communications will be coordinated through the President's office.
 - RRCC will follow business interruption and closure procedures utilizing internal and external communications plans developed by the CRT
- Communications will be via the RRCC website, a dedicated website, telephone system, or other communications systems (such as ConnectEd) that provide for the dissemination of information and advising employees, students, families and the general public as appropriate.

Communications to Employees

- Communications to employees shall be directed by the CRT operating procedures and the Pandemic Influenza Plan. Red Rocks will advise employees in advance where to find up-to-date and reliable information.
- Communications will be via the website, a dedicated website, telephone system, or other communications systems that provide for the dissemination of information and advising employees, students, families and the general public as appropriate.
- Educational communications will be provided to encourage employees to acquire and maintain personal, regular healthcare services.
- Educational communications will be provided regarding state policies for employee's compensation and sick leave absences that may be unique to a pandemic.

Communications to Students

- Communications will be via the RRCC website, a dedicated website, telephone mass-notification system, or other communications systems that provide for the dissemination of information and advising employees, students, families and the general public as appropriate.

- RRCC will communicate and educate faculty/staff/students about effective hygiene habits before any outbreaks occur to protect everyone now (promotion of frequent hand washing, cough/sneeze etiquette).
- RRCC will:
 - Disseminate information about the pandemic preparedness and response plan
 - Anticipate the potential fear and anxiety of students, (and employees) as a result of rumors and misinformation, and plan rapid and accurate communications accordingly
 - Disseminate information for students, faculty and staff who have families and dependents about the potential impact a pandemic influenza outbreak can have and how to prepare their families to respond to school and community service interruptions

REDUCING THE SPREAD OF THE VIRUS

Upon notification that a potential outbreak of a pandemic influenza is occurring within the United States and or Canada, the CRT will do the following:

- Set up prominent notices at all entry points to instruct employees, students and visitors not to enter the building if they have symptoms of influenza
- Informational postings will be placed around the school (including entrances, notice boards, meeting rooms and restrooms) to educate employees, students, and visitors on how to stop the spread of the virus
 - Notices will contain information regarding hand hygiene, covering coughs and sneezes, and student spacing
- Ensure adequate supplies of tissues, hand sanitizing gels, disinfectant hand soaps and disinfectant cleaning supplies are available
- Require the Marketing and Communications office to make available to employees and students a pandemic influenza fact sheet regarding stopping the spread of the virus and performing effective student spacing
- Instruct that all shared work areas (such as desktops, tables, door knobs, stair rails, etc.) be cleaned with a disinfectant at least daily, and preferably more often if possible
- Consult with CCCS and prepare the RRCC faculty and staff to function with a significant increase in absenteeism
- Consult with Colorado Health Department and prepare Red Rocks to implement policies and procedures for containment measures (canceling student activities and other mass gatherings)

- Prepare faculty and staff for the implementation of alternative procedures to insure continuity of instruction, (i.e. distance learning methods (web-based, telephone trees, mailed lessons and assignments, etc.)
- Consult with staff and faculty and prepare for a possible college closure.
- Prepare to implement student spacing protocols (social distancing)
 - [Student spacing refers distancing individuals and strategies to reduce the spread of the virus between people.]
 - Education on student spacing should be distributed campus-wide.
 - Student spacing strategies may include:
 - Space students' three (3) feet apart, in small pods or clusters
 - Discourage prolonged congregation in hallways, cafeteria, etc.
 - Closure of TV, game and lounge rooms
 - Limit or eliminate group activities and interaction
 - Cancel school activities that place individuals in close proximity

Maintenance and Cleaning

- Disinfection of shared work areas, counters, railings, door knobs and openers, stair rails, elevator buttons, and public telephones should be performed more frequently during the influenza pandemic.
- Filters of the HVAC systems should be cleaned and changed more frequently.
- Telephones should not be shared whenever possible. Shared phones should be cleaned frequently by the users.
- Computer keyboards and mice should not be shared whenever possible. Shared computer keyboards and mouse should be cleaned / disinfected between each user using recommended treated wipes. (NOTE: *Free liquids should not be used on electrical equipment. Use cleaning materials recommended by the equipment manufacturers.*)
- Where operationally possible, during the day increase ventilation to the facilities to decrease spread of disease.

Educating Students/Staff to Eliminate Concern

- Recognizing that there will be anxiety regarding the pandemic influenza activities that may contribute to increased absenteeism and/or increased distress to staff, the CRT will address this by:
 - Education of, and appropriate communication to, employees and students
 - As more information becomes available, provide timely updates to employees and students

- As needed, communicate with local resources and local public health services the need to provide access to available support mechanisms, (for example: mental health, social services and faith based resources)

Managing Illness in Staff, Students or Visitors

- Marketing and Communications will post information on what to do if people get sick while at RRCC
- RRCC will educate staff and students regarding symptoms of illness
- If a person becomes ill, or if someone observes that another person is exhibiting symptoms of influenza at work/school; the ill person will be instructed to leave campus facilities as soon as possible and should be encouraged to seek medical care
- Educate staff and students regarding standard guidelines for staying home and when they may return to school

- **PREVENTION / TREATMENT**

Influenza Vaccine

Public health officials will make the best use of available vaccine and will inform schools and the public on how any available vaccine will be used. It may take six months or more to manufacture the vaccine after the pandemic begins.

- RRCC will encourage employees, and students, to obtain the annual seasonal influenza vaccines
- The Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment, and the Center for Disease Control will provide advice on priority groups for pandemic influenza immunization

Anti-Viral Medication

Anti-viral medications may play an integral role in the treatment and prevention of pandemic influenza; however, their efficacy against a pandemic strain of influenza is currently unknown. Unlike the influenza vaccine, limited amounts of certain antiviral medications are already available, though there may be barriers in attempting to use them as a treatment and prevention tool in the event of pandemic influenza.

- The Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment and the Center for Disease Control will provide recommendations of the use of anti-viral medication

BUSINESS CONTINUITY OF OPERATIONS

- Red Rocks Community College and the CRT will identify core functions, people and skills and develop strategies to manage these prior to the pandemic.
 - Identification of essential staff and functions
 - Planning for absenteeism of students and staff
 - Communication with students/faculty/staff
 - Pandemic Influenza education for students/faculty/staff

- Red Rocks Community College and the CRT will develop a process for maintaining the operations of the business office (including budget, payroll, and ongoing communications with employees and students).
 - Identification of essential staff and functions
 - Planning for absenteeism of custodial staff
 - Planning for absenteeism of facilities maintenance staff
 - Planning for absenteeism of supervisory and administration staff
 - Planning for absenteeism of payroll, human resources and support business functions
 - Ordering and stocking of essential supplies and support services
 - Planning for absenteeism of support service providers and contractors
 - Planning for interruption and failure of critical equipment operation
 - Communication with staff
 - Pandemic Influenza education for employees

- Red Rocks Community College and the CRT will ensure that a process exists for providing alternative delivery strategies to insure continuity of instruction, (i.e. distance learning methods, web-based, telephone trees, mailed lessons and assignments, etc.) in the event of elevated absenteeism or college closure.

APPENDIX – A**WEB-SITE LINKS**

For Pandemic Influenza information click on the following links:

<http://www.pandemicflu.gov/>

<http://www.cdphe.state.co.us/index.html>

Pandemic preparedness and prevention:

<http://www.pandemicflu.gov/health/>

<http://www.ready.gov/>

Pandemic influenza and its potential impact:

http://www.who.int/csr/disease/avian_influenza/avian_faqs/en/index.html

<http://www.who.int/csr/disease/influenza/pandemic10things/en/index.html>

APPENDIX - B**FEDERAL, STATE AND LOCAL PLANNING FOR PANDEMIC INFLUENZA**

Pandemic influenza will take federal, state and local resources to respond. Roles vary at each level, with general guidance provided at the federal level with detailed operational plans at the state and local levels.

Federal Role

- The federal government provides general guidance and laboratory support to states, supports vaccine research and conducts national and international disease surveillance activities. In November, 2005, the US Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) released its latest pandemic influenza plan which can be found at:

<http://www.hhs.gov/pandemicflu/plan/>

State Role

The state reviews federal guidance and develops plans for statewide implementation.

- The Colorado Department of Health pandemic plans can be found at:

<http://www.cdphe.state.co.us/bt/panflu.html>

County Role

The Jefferson County Health Department reviews federal and statewide guidelines and plans for local implementation.

- The Jefferson County Department of Health pandemic planning guide can be found at: http://www.co.jefferson.co.us/health/health_T111_R225.htm

APPENDIX - C

Crisis Response Team

Michele Haney President	<u>Alternates</u>
Bruce Walthers VP Student Services	Nancy Carlson
Colleen Jorgensen VP Instruction	Wayne Caruolo
Peggy Morgan VP Administrative Services	Kathy Kaoudis
Bob Kraus Police Chief	Justin Verardi
Bill Cherrington Information Technology	Bill Cherrington
Jen Squire Human Resources Director	Cathy O'Connell
Mark Bana Facilities Director	Greg Berry
Joan Smith RMEC Executive Director	Jeanette Werner
Sue Barnett Child Care Center	Susan Padgett
Kim Rein Marketing and Communications Director	Amy Cohen