

# State of Georgia Pandemic Influenza Planning Kit for Key Service Businesses



Prepared for  
the  
**Georgia Hospital Community Bioterrorism Preparedness Program**  
Georgia Division of Public Health  
by  
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The Georgia Division of Public Health (GDPH) is charged with protecting the public health. In case of an influenza (or flu) pandemic, the best way to do this is to plan ahead. Preparing for a pandemic of the flu involves taking steps to limit, as much as possible, the number of people who get sick, and preparing to take care of possibly large numbers of people who do get sick. The GDPH is working to accomplish both of these objectives.

### Goals of This Planning Kit

The Georgia Division of Public Health developed this planning kit to provide information that will help you prepare for an influenza pandemic so that you can:

- ☐ Help your employees and customers protect their families and your community,
- ☐ Help limit the spread of the disease once a pandemic starts, and
- ☐ Help to care for those in your community who do get sick.

### Background on Influenza Pandemics

A pandemic is a worldwide outbreak of a disease. An influenza (or flu) pandemic occurs when a new flu virus appears or “emerges” in the human population, causes serious illness, and then spreads easily from person to person worldwide.

Pandemics are different from seasonal outbreaks or “epidemics” of the flu.

- **Seasonal outbreaks** are caused by subtypes of flu viruses that already exist among people.
- **Pandemic outbreaks** are caused by new subtypes or by subtypes that have never circulated among people, or that have not circulated among people for a long time.

In a typical flu season, approximately 36,000 people die of the flu in the United States, mostly the elderly. Past influenza pandemics have led to high levels of illness, death, social disruption, and economic loss.

### How New Subtypes of Flu Viruses Appear or Emerge

There are many different subtypes of flu viruses. The subtypes differ based upon certain proteins on the surface of the virus. Pandemic viruses emerge when there is a sudden, major change in flu viruses. These changes are caused by new combinations of the proteins on the surface of the virus. This change results in a new flu virus subtype.

The appearance of a new flu virus subtype is the first step toward a pandemic. But the new virus subtype also must spread easily from person to person to cause a pandemic. Once a new pandemic flu virus emerges and spreads, it normally becomes established among people and circulates for many years as seasonal epidemics of flu.

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the World Health Organization monitor flu activity around the world, and look for new strains of flu virus to emerge that might cause a pandemic.

#### Flu Pandemics During the 20th Century

During the 20th century, the emergence of new flu virus subtypes caused three pandemics, all of which spread around the world within 1 year of being detected.

- In 1918-19, the "**Spanish flu**," caused the highest number of known flu deaths. More than 500,000 people died in the United States. Up to 50 million people may have died worldwide. Many people died within the first few days after infection, and others died of complications later. Nearly half of those who died were young, healthy adults. For every 1,000 people who got the Spanish flu, 20 died.
- In 1957-58, "**Asian flu**," caused about 70,000 deaths in the United States. First identified in China in late February 1957, the Asian flu spread to the United States by June 1957.
- In 1968-69, "**Hong Kong flu**," caused about 34,000 deaths in the United States. This virus was first detected in Hong Kong in early 1968 and spread to the United States later that year. For every 1,000 people who got the Hong Kong flu, 5 died.

Both the Asian flu and the Hong Kong flu pandemics were caused by new viruses created when a human flu virus and an avian (bird) flu virus combined. The origin of the 1918-19 pandemic virus is not clear.

#### Stages of a Pandemic

The World Health Organization (WHO) has defined the phases of a pandemic:

##### *Interpandemic period (between pandemics)*

- Phase 1: No new flu virus subtypes have been detected in humans. A flu virus subtype that has caused human infection may be present in animals. If present in animals, the risk of human infection or disease is considered to be low.
- Phase 2: No new flu virus subtypes have been detected in humans. However, a circulating animal flu virus subtype poses a substantial risk of human disease.

The difference between phase 1 and phase 2 is based on scientists' judgment of the risk of humans becoming infected by the subtypes that are infecting animals.

##### *Pandemic alert period*

- Phase 3: Humans have become infected with a new subtype, but there has been no spreading of the virus from human-to-human.
- Phase 4: There has been some human-to-human transmission, but it has been limited to small, highly localized cluster(s), suggesting that the virus is not well adapted to humans.
- Phase 5: Human-to-human spread is still localized, but now in larger cluster(s), suggesting that the virus is becoming increasingly better adapted to humans, but may not yet be fully transmissible (substantial pandemic risk).

The distinction between phase 3, phase 4 and phase 5 is based on scientists' judgment of whether the virus is well-adapted to humans, how quickly it will spread, and how sick people will get when they have the virus.

### *Pandemic period*

Phase 6: Human to human spread has increased and is sustained in the general population.

### Vaccines to Protect Against Pandemic Flu Viruses

A vaccine probably would not be available in the early stages of a pandemic. When a new vaccine against a flu virus is being developed, scientists around the world work together to select the virus strain that will offer the best protection against that virus, and then manufacturers use the selected strain to develop a vaccine. Once a potential pandemic strain of flu virus is identified, it takes several months before a vaccine will be widely available. If a pandemic occurs, it is expected that the U.S. government will work with many partner groups to make recommendations to guide the early use of vaccine.

### Antiviral Medications to Prevent and Treat Pandemic Flu

Four different flu antiviral medications (amantadine (Symmetrel), rimantadine (Flumadine), oseltamivir (Tamiflu), and zanamivir (Relenza)) are approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) for the treatment and/or prevention of flu. However, sometimes flu virus strains can become resistant to one or more of these drugs, and the drugs may not always work. For example, the flu viruses identified in human patients in Asia in 2004 and 2005 have been resistant to amantadine and rimantadine. Monitoring of avian viruses for resistance to flu antiviral medications is continuing.

### Preparing for the Next Pandemic

Many scientists believe it is only a matter of time until the next flu pandemic occurs. The severity of the next pandemic cannot be predicted, but modeling studies suggest that its effect in the United States could be severe. Without vaccination or drugs, it has been estimated that in the United States a “medium-level” pandemic could cause:

- 89,000 to 207,000 deaths,
- 314,000 to 734,000 hospitalizations,
- 18 to 42 million doctor visits,
- 20 to 47 million people sick, but not sick enough to go to the doctor.
- 15% to 35% of the U.S. population could be affected.

A pandemic as bad as the Spanish flu in 1918 – 1919 could cause:

- About 1.9 million deaths,
- About 8.5 million hospitalizations,
- xx to xx million doctor visits,
- xx to xx million people sick, but not sick enough to go to the doctor.
- xx% to xx% of the U.S. population could be affected.

Recent examples of avian flu outbreaks in Hong Kong in 1997, 1998, and 2002, and the ongoing widespread outbreaks of avian flu among poultry in Asia, show the importance of preparing for a pandemic. It has been 36 years since the last pandemic.

#### Georgia's Pandemic Flu Plan

During a pandemic, doctor's offices and hospitals will need to treat many more patients than they usually do. Doctors, nurses, and other health care workers will also get sick with the flu, making it more difficult for doctor's offices and hospitals to keep up with the increased demand.

Georgia's hospitals have been working with the Georgia Division of Public Health to plan how they can take of more patients in a pandemic or other health emergency. Equipment and supplies are being purchased for these "extra" beds. Plans are also being developed for temporary health care facilities that can be opened if hospitals are full.

Another important part of Georgia's Pandemic Flu Plan is Home Patient Care Management. The goal of this program is to keep people at home as long as they can be safely cared for by family or friends. This will allow hospitals to concentrate on, and provide better care to, the sickest patients. It should also help to reduce the exposure of flu patients to other infections that they would not be exposed to at home. We are organizing systems to care for as many patients at home as possible:

- There will be an 800 number for people to call when someone in their family gets the flu. Nurses will coach them in how to care for their loved one, and will continue to follow-up with them until everyone in their family is well again. They will also help them to decide when they do need to go to a doctor's office or the hospital.
- Information on how to care for a flu patient will be available in brochures, videos, and television broadcasts. These materials will also include information on how to protect yourself and other family members.
- Kits of medical supplies not normally found in homes will be delivered to patients' homes.
- Health care workers may visit homes if the nurse managing the patient's care feels that she needs an evaluation by a trained health care worker.

An important benefit of caring for as many patients at home as possible is limiting the number of people with whom flu patients come in contact. We will be asking people to stay at home and away from others as long as someone in their household is sick with the flu. This plan will only work if there are resources in the community to help. That is where your organization comes in.

#### The Role of Key Service Businesses in Georgia's Pandemic Flu Plan

For the purpose of this document, Key Service Businesses are those that provide goods or services that people normally leave their homes to obtain, that they cannot do without, and that can be delivered to them at home when someone in the household is sick with the flu. Pharmacies and drug stores are the main categories of key service businesses. Restaurants may also be considered as key service businesses.

The first thing that we are asking you to do is to start to include health information in your normal communications with your employees and customers. Studies have shown that people develop their attitudes about health related matters more from their family, friends, and associates than from doctors and nurses or other health care providers. We will have a much better chance of minimizing the number of people who get sick and die during a flu pandemic if everyone adopts a few simple practices as part of their daily routine of caring for themselves and their family. These simple things can slow the transmission of the colds and flu, and will be especially important if we have a pandemic flu season.

### **Key Service Businesses**

The second thing that we are asking you to do is to help provide support to families who get the flu. Households with a flu patient will still need groceries, medications, and other supplies. If we can arrange for these things to be delivered to their home, we can keep those exposed to the flu from exposing others. Some families may have no one in the house well enough to prepare meals. Having meals delivered to the house will help them to eat well enough to get well and get their strength back. These are things that organizations such as yours can help with.

Of course, this help needs to be made available in a well-planned and careful way so that your staff knows how to protect themselves and their families (and to understand that they are safe). It will also be important that additional precautions be added to your normal sanitary procedures. This is why it is important to plan ahead and why we are asking for your participation in our planning efforts today

### What you can do now – Provide Information

Where to get information

[www.cdc.gov/flu/professionals/flugallery/index.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/flu/professionals/flugallery/index.htm)

Additional sources to be determined.

How and when will you share information on preparing for the flu with your employees and customers?

- ☐ At regular meetings/events
- ☐ At special meetings on the flu

Preparing ahead for a possible flu pandemic will help to make sure that each of your employees and customers knows what they should do, knows how to do it, and has the supplies on hand that they will need.

What everyone should do:

- ☐ Wash hands frequently
- ☐ Wear a mask when coughing or sneezing
- ☐ Wear gloves and a mask when caring for someone with the flu
- ☐

Everyone should know how to:

- ☐ Wash hands effectively
- ☐ Put on and remove gloves safely
- ☐ Put on and remove a mask safely
- ☐ Take a temperature
- ☐

Supplies to have on hand at home???:

- ☐ Gloves
- ☐ Masks
- ☐ Thermometer
- ☐ Over the counter medications for flu symptoms
- ☐



### What you can do now - Make a Plan

The first thing to do is to identify who within your organization will coordinate your planning for pandemic flu. This individual should familiarize themselves with the information in the introduction on pandemic flu. They will also need to learn and understand infection control procedures.

Next you need to decide what your organization will do during the pandemic. You may decide only to keep your employees informed of what is happening and what they need to do. We hope that many of you will decide to help provide support services in your community to those who become sick.

In each community there will be an organization designated as the lead organization for that community. They will serve as the contact point for the public health nurses managing the care of the patients at home. The nurses will call this organization when they have a patient who needs help. This lead organization will make the arrangements for the needed services to be provided by businesses such as yours, volunteers from community organizations, and others. Let your customers know what you are doing, so that they can ask to be referred to you for support services.

Our Pandemic Flu Planning Coordinator will be: \_\_\_\_\_

We can provide help with:

- ☐ Grocery shopping & delivery
- ☐ Medication delivery
- ☐ Meal preparation & delivery
- ☐

Look for a sticker on the front of this book for the name of the lead organization in your community.

Depending on how large your organization is and what activities you decide to include in your Plan, you might want to name someone to do some or all of the following jobs. Smaller organizations may need only one person to do all of these jobs. Businesses with more than one location may be able to plan at their corporate level, but it will be very important to have someone responsible at each location who is knowledgeable about what needs to be done.

### Pandemic Flu Planning Coordinator

This person would lead your organization's effort, recruit people to serve in the other roles, etc.

### Health Education

This function is responsible for getting the word out to the your employees and customers about how they can protect themselves and their families from the flu. They will also help your employees and customers learn how to care for themselves should someone in their family become ill. **They may also be responsible for ensuring that each employee receives an overview on pandemic influenza and infection control procedures.**

### Coordinator(s) of Services

You may want to have someone responsible for each type of activity you will be doing. They would be in charge of orienting employees and reinforcing the infection control procedures most important for the activities in which they will be involved. They may also be responsible for scheduling the services.

Write here the names of the people named to do each job. For activities you are not including in your plan, write "NA" for Not Applicable.

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Grocery shopping & delivery

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Meal preparation & delivery

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Medication delivery

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**What You Can Do When a Pandemic Alert is Issued by Public Health**

Provide information to your employees and customers

Reduce contact where possible, following guidance issued by Public Health

Review your plan to provide support services to affected families in your community. Get ready to implement it.

- 
- 
- ☐ Meet with the lead organization and other organizations in your community to review your plans and how they will be implemented.



**What You Can Do When a Pandemic Reaches Your Community**

Provide information

Reduce contact where possible

Implement your plan to provide support services to affected families in your community.

- 
- ☐ Cancel large gatherings
  - ☐ Don't shake hands when greeting people

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- ☐ Employees should be asked to stay home if they or anyone in their family has flu symptoms.
  - ☐ Remind employees what they need to do to protect themselves and their families.
  - ☐ Communicate regularly with the lead organization in your community

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**Where you can get more information**

**Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)**

<http://www.cdc.gov/flu/>

<http://www.cdc.gov/flu/avian/>

<http://www.cdc.gov/flu/avian/gen-info/pandemics.htm>

or call CDC at 800-CDC-INFO (English and Spanish) or 888-232-6348 (TTY).

**Georgia Division of Public Health (GDPH)**

<http://www.health.state.ga.us/epi/flu/whatyouknow.asp>

<http://www.health.state.ga.us/epi/flu/recommendations.asp>

<http://www.health.state.ga.us/epi/flu/flu-diabetes.asp>

Print materials from GDPH?

**U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS)**

<http://www.hhs.gov/flu/>

<http://www.dhhs.gov/nvpo/pandemics/>.

**National Library of Medicine**

<http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/tutorials/influenza/htm/index.htm>

**Food and Drug Administration (FDA)**

<http://www.fda.gov/opacom/lowlit/clds&flu.html>

**World Health Organization (WHO)**

<http://www.who.int/topics/influenza/en/>

[http://www.who.int/csr/resources/publications/influenza/WHO\\_CDS\\_CSR\\_GIP\\_2005\\_5](http://www.who.int/csr/resources/publications/influenza/WHO_CDS_CSR_GIP_2005_5)