



CAPE PANDEMIC INFLUENZA PLANNING

2019-2020

Background Information

This information should foster a basic understanding of pandemic influenza and allow planning and preparation to unfold in a more informed manner.

Key Questions

A number of important and relevant points must be considered and understood if comprehending and adequately planning for the impact of a potential pandemic influenza outbreak is to occur. The following information regarding pandemic influenza, broken down into sets of key questions, offers a means for understanding the unique characteristics of pandemic influenza as a potentially virulent disease. Reading through these questions will provide a basis for understanding the nature of pandemic influenza as a disease and give a sense of its potential impact.

What is pandemic influenza?

Pandemic influenza is a type of influenza that occurs every few decades and spreads quickly, affecting most countries and regions around the world.

Unlike the seasonal influenza that usually occurs every winter in Canada, pandemic influenza can occur at any time of year.

Influenza pandemics have occurred for centuries – three times in the last one hundred years – resulting in many thousands of deaths.

Experts predict another pandemic, but cannot say exactly when it will happen. When it does, it may come in two or more “waves,” several months apart. Each wave may last two to three months.

Pandemic influenza is much more serious than seasonal influenza. At least a quarter of the population may be affected.

Pandemic influenza is likely to cause the same symptoms as the seasonal influenza. However, the symptoms may be more severe because nobody will have any immunity or protection against that particular virus.

A serious pandemic is also likely to cause many deaths, disrupt the daily life of many people and cause intense pressure on healthcare and other services.

Every pandemic is different, and until the virus starts circulating, it is impossible to predict its full effects.

What causes a pandemic influenza?

Pandemics of influenza happen when a new influenza virus, which is very different from the commonly circulating strains, appears. Because it is a new virus few – if any – people have any immunity. This allows the new virus to spread widely, easily and to cause more serious illness.

Who is at risk?

Once a pandemic influenza starts, everybody will be at risk of getting pandemic influenza. Certain groups may be at greater risk than others. Until the virus starts circulating, we will not know for sure who they will be.

Experts predict anywhere between 2 million and 50 million deaths around the world. The *Canadian Pandemic Influenza Plan* assumes that about a quarter of the population will be affected, with an estimated 11,000 to 58,000 deaths.

Is there a vaccine to protect against pandemic influenza?

There is no vaccine ready to protect against all pandemic influenzas. A vaccine to protect against influenzas such as H1N1 are developed as the virus is identified. Vaccines used for seasonal influenza immunizations will not protect against H1N1. These vaccines will continue to protect against common influenza which may also cause illness during the same time.

Medicines called antivirals may be used to treat pandemic influenza. However, until the pandemic virus is circulating, we won't know how well the antivirals will work.

How does influenza spread?

Influenza viruses are easily passed from person to person through direct or indirect contact. You can catch influenza through breathing in air containing droplets or aerosols containing the virus produced when an infected person talks, coughs or sneezes. You can also catch it through touching an infected person or surface contaminated with the virus, and then touching your face.

Influenza viruses have an incubation period - the time a person is infected with influenza before showing symptoms is one to three days. People are likely to be infectious from just before symptoms develop until four to five days after the onset of symptoms. Children, however, tend to be infectious for much longer.

Are there different types of influenza viruses?

Influenza viruses are divided into three main groups: influenza A, B and C. Type A viruses are the source of most seasonal flu epidemics and have caused all previous pandemics. Whereas influenza B and C viruses infect humans only, influenza A viruses also infects birds and other animals such as pigs and horses. This ability to jump the species barrier enables influenza A viruses to cause pandemics.

What do we know about pandemic influenza?

We know that pandemic influenza viruses spread quickly. During the pandemics of 1957 and 1968, the viruses took only three to four months to spread from south-east Asia – where they were first identified – to Europe and North America.

The intercontinental spread of Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) in 2003 was even faster. Within four months of the global alert, more than 8,000 people had been affected in 30 countries across six continents, and 900 people had died.

Air travel is likely to make the spread of pandemic influenza just as quick. Even with good planning and preparation, the consequences of pandemic influenza will still be very serious.

What are the differences between pandemic influenza and seasonal influenza?

There are important differences between seasonal and pandemic influenza (It's in Your Hands – page 5). Epidemics of regular human seasonal influenza occur every year around the world. An epidemic is a widespread outbreak of disease in a single community, population or region. A pandemic spreads around the world affecting many hundreds of thousands of people across many countries.

What are the key features of pandemic influenza?

For an influenza virus to be capable of causing a pandemic, it must be able to:

- infect people (not just mammals and birds)
- cause illness in a high number of those infected
- spread easily from person to person
- spread widely because the virus is significantly different from previously circulating strains and most people will have little or no immunity to it

All previous influenza pandemics had these features.

(Taken from the Alberta Health Services' "Quick Facts about Pandemic Influenza")

CAPE SCHOOL ACTION STEPS PANDEMIC INFLUENZA PLAN

The following is a chronological list of important step-by-step actions the school **MUST** take before, during and after a Pandemic Influenza outbreak. **Pandemic Influenza can have several cycles or waves so this list may need to be repeated.**

Important to note is that a school closure may occur at any time under the direction of the Medical Officer of Health and/or the Superintendent or his designate.

PREPAREDNESS & PLANNING PHASE

- Ensure that the Pandemic Influenza Plan is initiated and communicated to all staff as a part of the Emergency Response Planning for the year. (Use this section of the Critical Response binder.)
- Educate staff, students and parents about: the differences between seasonal influenza, bird flu and pandemic influenza; best hygienic practices to prevent any sort of influenza; what could occur in a pandemic. Work with AHS local health officials and the Public Health nurse.
- Educate parents about the need to describe their child's actual symptoms when calling-in absent to the school or leaving a message on the "voice mail".
- Prior to September 30th, Parent Letter #1** in this section needs to be sent to parents as a means of preparedness. Send home pamphlets available from the AHS and a copy of the 'AHS Symptoms Pages' (Appendix #1 and #2).
- Decide the roles and responsibilities of school staff to prevent the spread of influenza.
- Train staff in influenza-symptom recognition. (AHS Symptoms pages 4 & 5 of the "It's in your Hands" booklet or Appendix #1). It is important to remember that a person who is infected does not show symptoms right away. But children who are getting ill may show different behaviour than usual, such as eating less or being irritable.
- Educate staff that symptomatic students need to be referred to the office for the purpose of attendance tracking and contact with parents.
- Improve the hygiene of students and staff. Use simple non-medical ways to reduce the spread of Influenza by "cough and sneeze etiquette," clean hands, and clean

work areas. Seek the assistance of the school health nurse to provide posters and sessions for the school.

- Determine whether the school should be cleaned differently or more often. Review the health needs of students. Some students may have a greater risk of infections. Encourage those families to talk to their health care provider. Some parents may need to be more cautious in keeping their children out of school.
- The school must track students' names on an 'Influenza Reporting Log' sheet. (Appendix #3).
- Ensure that Standard Surveillance/Disease Recognition Procedures are in place and implemented. (See surveillance definitions in this section.)

Outbreak of Influenza Disease

LESS THAN 10% STUDENTS

- Continue Standard Surveillance Reporting. (See surveillance definitions in this section.)
- Report any required surveillance information to the AHS Communicable Disease Unit.
- Send out letters of communication to parents if and when instructed by officials of the AHS or deemed necessary by the school administration.
- Any communication with the media is to be made by the Superintendent or his designate. Direct any calls to the Superintendent for information.

Expansion of the Outbreak

10% OR MORE OF STUDENTS ILL (but less than 30%)

- Absenteeism, as collected by the school on the 'Influenza Reporting Log' sheet, is reported to the School Health Nurse/AHS Communicable Disease Unit on a daily basis.
- Begin Intensive Surveillance Reporting. (See surveillance definitions in this section.)
- Send out letters of communication to parents if and when instructed by officials of the AHS or deemed necessary by the school administration.

**Continued Expansion of the Outbreak
School Closure May Become Necessary**

- School closure may become necessary due to severe expansion of the outbreak among students and/or staff.
- School closure will be determined by the Superintendent or his designate, or by the Alberta Health Services in communications with the Superintendent.
- Send out letters of communication to parents if and when instructed by officials of the AHS or deemed necessary by the school administration.

Following the Outbreak

- The AHS and/or the Superintendent issue declaration that the school can open.
- Convene/contact the CAPE Critical Response Team to address school needs for recovery.
- Send out letters of communication to parents if and when instructed by officials of the AHS or deemed necessary by the school administration.
- Continue communicating with AHS Communicable Disease Unit.
- Return to Standard Surveillance Reporting. (See surveillance definitions in this section.)

DEFINITIONS OF SURVEILLANCE LEVELS

Standard Surveillance

Influenza activity reported in the Alberta Health Services (less than 10% school absenteeism due to influenza-like illness).

- Monitor daily attendance with the Influenza Reporting Log.
- Do not report absences to the AHS unless they are greater than 10%.
- Teachers monitor students during school hours for influenza-like symptoms. Students who appear symptomatic must be referred to the office for purposes of attendance tracking and contact with parents.
- **Send home students/staff who display influenza-like symptoms.**

Intensive Surveillance

High numbers of influenza-like illnesses are reported in the Alberta Health Services (10% or greater school absenteeism due to influenza-like illness).

- Monitor daily attendance with the Influenza Reporting Log.
- Send daily absence reports (Influenza Reporting Log) to the AHS Communicable Disease Unit.
- Continue morning 'Influenza check'.
- Send home students/staff who display Influenza-like symptoms.
- Begin preparations for potential school closure.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Teresa Di Ninno – as the CAPE superintendent, would serve as the pandemic manager during the crisis. This would include two major responsibilities:

- All major decisions including school closures would be made by the superintendent or the Medical Officer of Health as part of a public health measure.
- All communications with the media regarding CAPE will be made by the superintendent as spokesperson for CAPE. The superintendent will be the only person issuing press releases or speaking with the media.

Jeney Gordon – as principal of CAPE, would be responsible for insuring that all OH&S protocols were followed during the pandemic crisis

Additional Critical Response Team Members 2019 – 2020

| Name | Position | Home | Office | Cellular |
|-----------------|--------------------------|--------------|--------------|--------------|
| Teresa Di Ninno | Superintendent | | 403-528-2983 | 403-957-0403 |
| Jeney Gordon | Principal | 403-529-0439 | 403-528-2983 | 403-504-9178 |
| Joleine Hartman | Administrative Assistant | | 403-528-2983 | 403-928-0969 |
| Monica Hopkins | Administrative Assistant | 403-526-8868 | 403-528-2983 | 403-580-7749 |

***The role of this team is to provide understanding of the CAPE Pandemic Influenza protocol for all within CAPE school, and to work in conjunction with the guidelines of the Alberta Health Services.**

Important Resources

Alberta Health Services: <https://www.alberta.ca/ministry-health.aspx> or

<http://www.albertahealthservices.ca/influenza.asp>

Health Link Alberta: <https://www.albertahealthservices.ca/assets/healthinfo/link/index.html>

Medicine Hat, call Toll-free 1-866-408-5465 (LINK)

Community Health Services: 403-502-8200

Calgary Office of the Medical Officer of Health: 403-955-6801

Medicine Hat Regional Hospital: 403-529-8000

Alberta Health and Wellness: <https://www.albertahealthservices.ca/influenza/influenza.aspx>

Important Information Web Site Links For Administrators

Alberta Health and Wellness: https://www.alberta.ca/pandemic-influenza.aspx?utm_source=redirector

Health Canada: <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/flu-influenza/canadian-pandemic-influenza-preparedness-planning-guidance-health-sector.html>

Public Health Agency of Canada Flu Watch: www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/fluwatch/index.html

World Health Organization: <http://www.who.int/influenza/en/>

In a pandemic, information and advice on how best to protect individual citizens and their families will be made widely available through information leaflets, websites and the media. Such advice will include where and how to seek medical assistance.

***The primary source of information will be the Alberta Health Services.**

**CAPE PANDEMIC INFLUENZA PLAN
APPENDIX**

CONTENTS:

- Appendix #1 – Letter to Parents for Communication by September 30th.
- Appendix #2 – Influenza Symptoms Sheet
- Appendix #3 – Influenza Reporting Log

APPENDIX #1

LETTER TO PARENTS

(Date)

Dear Parents:

As a part of our mandate to provide a safe and healthy school environment for all students, CAPE (Public Charter) School in conjunction with the Alberta Health Services has prepared a plan in response to the risk of an influenza pandemic. For this reason it is important for us to be proactive in our communications with each family, and to confirm the importance of promoting healthy habits to be used by school and home to help prevent the spread of germs.

People suffering with influenza can exhibit symptoms that may include fever, cough, muscles aches, lethargy and lack of appetite. Some people with influenza like illness symptoms have also reported runny nose, sore throat, nausea, vomiting and diarrhea. **Parents MUST plan for keeping their children home for at least 7 days from the onset of influenza like illness (ILI) symptoms. If symptoms last longer than 7 days, then they MUST stay home until 24 hours after the symptoms are gone. (Alberta Health Services).**

STUDENTS WHO ARE SHOWING INFLUENZA LIKE ILLNESS (ILI) SYMPTOMS AT SCHOOL WILL BE SENT HOME IMMEDIATELY. When contacted, parents will be required to arrange for pick up of their student at the school.

As a proactive measure, health officials want people to protect themselves against pandemic influenza. Here are some ways to protect your family:

- Keep children who are sick with influenza like symptoms at home. Don't send them to school.
- Teach your children to wash hands often with soap and water for 20 seconds. Be sure to set a good example by doing this yourself.
- Teach your children to cover coughs and sneezes with tissues or by coughing into the inside of the elbow. Be sure to set a good example by doing this yourself.
- Teach your children to stay at least three feet away from people who are sick.
- People who are sick should stay home from work or school and avoid other people until they are better.

For more information please visit one of the following sources:

- Calgary Health Link – call Toll-free 1-866-408-5465 (LINK) or visit www.healthlinkalberta.ca
- Alberta Health Services at <https://www.alberta.ca/ministry-health.aspx>

In the event that you need to report your child's absence from school please describe the symptoms your child is suffering from as a way of helping us to provide important data to the Alberta Health Services. Thank you for your efforts in helping to prevent the spread of germs by promoting healthy habits at home.

Sincerely,

Jeney Gordon
Principal

APPENDIX #2**AHS INFLUENZA SYMPTOMS SHEET****What are the symptoms?****Symptoms of influenza include:**

- sudden fever of 38° C (100.4°F) or higher.
- dry cough.
- aching body, especially head, lower back and legs.
- extreme weakness and tiredness.

Other symptoms can include:

- chills.
- aching behind the eyes.
- loss of appetite.
- sore throat.
- runny or stuffy nose.

For people older than 75 with influenza, the temperature may be lower, for example 37.2°C (99°F). They may also experience vomiting, diarrhea or stomach pain.

Fever usually goes down and the person starts to feel better in 3 to 5 days. Tiredness and cough can continue for several weeks.

Influenza symptoms are different from those of a cold or gastroenteritis (“stomach flu”).

Is it influenza, a cold or “stomach flu”?

| Symptoms/ Description | Influenza | Common Cold | Stomach Flu |
|--------------------------|--------------|----------------|-------------------------|
| Fever | Usually high | Sometimes | Rare |
| Chills, aches, pain | Frequent | Slight | Common |
| Loss of appetite | Sometimes | Sometimes | Common |
| Cough | Usual | Sometimes | Rare |
| Sore throat | Sometimes | Sometimes | Rare |
| Sniffles or sneezes | Sometimes | Common | Rare |
| Involves whole body | Often | Never | Stomach / bowel only |

| | | | |
|-------------------------|------------------------------------|----------------------------------|----------------|
| Symptoms appear quickly | Always | More gradual | Fairly quickly |
| Extreme tiredness | Common | Rare | Sometimes |
| Complications | Pneumonia; can be life threatening | Sinus infection Ear infection | Dehydration |

