

Critical Capacity Module VI

Public Education & Emergency Risk Communication

INTRODUCTION

The ability to implement communication strategies and actions before and during an influenza pandemic is a critical capacity because such communication supports effective preparedness and response efforts. Strong emergency risk communications and public outreach activities are conducted in order to build trust, confidence and cooperation. The goal is to prevent fear-driven and potentially damaging public responses to a pandemic influenza crisis.

All emergency risk communication strategies will keep the following points in mind:

1. Delivering sound, thoughtful and timely emergency risk communication will help to limit ineffective, fear-driven and a potentially damaging public response.
2. Public information will provide general knowledge of the situation, awareness of the issues and concerns to be addressed and an understanding of their individual roles and responsibilities.

This module will help guide and prepare the Santa Clara Valley Health & Hospital System (SCVHHS) Public Information Office and the Santa Clara County Public Health Department in communicating key messages to the general public, the news media, healthcare providers and other partners (e.g., businesses, schools, local governments, etc.) before, during and after a pandemic influenza.

Emergency risk communications works to convey to the general public the need for preparedness. It also develops central messages and materials to be shared broadly with public and private sectors, and provides support to Public Health Department staff that work with key partners.

Message development will determine the type of information to convey, as well as deciding what messages are to be delivered prior to and during a pandemic. Key messages include informing the public about the potential threat pandemic influenza presents and building a solid foundation of information on which future actions can be based. New messages and materials will need to be developed as situations dictate.

The following key components are also included in this module:

1. Spokesperson preparation and training,
2. Coordination of message development, and
3. Communication activities conducted with outside partners, agencies and organizations.

All messages are developed with key Public Health Department staff and are approved by the Health Officer. During the course of pre-event activities and especially during a pandemic influenza event, messages and other information will be updated and customized. During a

pandemic, a variety of communications methods will be used to notify, inform and update key partners and the general public.

For specifics regarding operations and staffing of the Public Information Office during an emergency or disaster, please refer to the Santa Clara County Public Health Department's Emergency Risk Communication Plan, which can be obtained through the SCVHHS Public Information Office at (408) 885-4164.

Desired Outcomes

1. Provide timely and accurate pre-event information to the public about pandemic influenza, pandemic influenza preparedness and actions, as well as Public Health Department plans and response.
2. During a pandemic event, provide the most current and accurate information including what is happening, what is being done and what people can do to protect themselves.

COMMUNICATING WITH THE GENERAL PUBLIC

Message Development

Alert Period (refer to page 2 for an explanation of the Pandemic Periods)

1. Develop key messages for printed materials, public presentations and the news media.
2. Provide a solid foundation of information upon which future actions can be based.
3. Key messages address Public Health Department activities, including planning efforts, as well as avian influenza education, pandemic influenza education and general preparations. A description of key messages is included in the final section of this module.

Pandemic Period (refer to page 2 for an explanation of the Pandemic Periods)

1. Update, customize and further develop key messages as the situation warrants.
2. Messages are used primarily for delivering information and communicating actions required to the general public through the news media.
3. Materials will be posted to the Web site as they are developed.

Public Education & Awareness Campaign

Alert Period

1. Conduct a public education and awareness campaign as resources allow.
2. Key messages are used in the various components of the campaign. Since the target of the campaign is the general public, it will be conducted in Santa Clara County's three threshold languages: English, Spanish and Vietnamese.

The following items were utilized in the public education and awareness campaign that has been conducted:

- a. Your Guide to Preparing for Pandemic Flu,
- b. Web site posting,

- c. Scripts,
- d. Radio ads and public service announcements,
- e. Print ads and Mercury News wrap,
- f. Theater and mall signs,
- g. Bus shelters, bus interior signs and bus boards,
- h. Television ads.

Material Development

Alert Period

1. Develop materials that provide information to the general public, media, and healthcare and other partners.
2. All materials will be posted to the Public Health Department's Web site as they are completed.

The following tools are included in the appendices:

- a. Your Guide to Preparing for Pandemic Flu (Tool M6-1),
- b. Cover Your Cough Poster (Tool M6-2),
- c. Wash Your Hands Poster (Tool M6-3),
- d. Pandemic Flu Fact Sheet (Tool M6-4),
- e. Health Officer Q&A (Tool M6-5),
- f. Home Preparedness Checklists (Tool M6-6: Emergency Supplies, Food Supplies, Medical Supplies).

Pandemic Period

1. Update current materials and develop new materials as the situation warrants.
2. Materials will be posted to the Public Health Department's Web site as they are developed.

Public Health Information Line

Alert Period

The Public Health Information Line (PHIL) includes prerecorded scripts in three languages: English, Spanish and Vietnamese. The PHIL recordings will reflect updated pandemic influenza information.

The SCCPHD will finalize a plan for using Valley Connections to increase information line capacity during a pandemic and conduct briefings for the appropriate staff.

Pandemic Period

PHIL will be fully activated to respond to calls from the general public. Scripts will be updated as the situation changes and staff will be briefed regularly.

Additional Communication Methods

Alert Period

Determine the resources and technologies needed to build Web-based communications. Items to consider include:

1. Public sign up list for email information.
2. Links to major informational Web sites.
3. Podcasts for members of the public to access audio information about the situation in Santa Clara County and preparedness action that they need to take.

WORKING WITH THE NEWS MEDIA

Media Information

Alert Period

Develop a packet of materials for the news media. The packet includes Santa Clara County Public Health Department information as well as approved outside materials. These materials include the following information:

1. Samples of public education materials,
2. Guidelines for business planning, and
3. Guidelines for personal protection.

The following tools are included in the appendices:

- a. Your Guide to Preparing for Pandemic Flu (Tool M6-1),
- b. Cover Your Cough Poster (Tool M6-2),
- c. Wash Your Hands Poster (Tool M6-3),
- d. Pandemic Flu Fact Sheet (Tool M6-4),
- e. Health Officer Q&A (Tool M6-5),
- f. Home Preparedness Checklists (Tool M6-6: Emergency Supplies, Food Supplies, Medical Supplies),
- g. Avian Flu Fact Sheet (Tool M6-7),
- h. Isolation & Quarantine Fact Sheet (Tool M6-8),
- i. Social Distancing Measures Fact Sheet (Tool M6-9).

Media Communications

Alert Period

1. Conduct media informational briefings, which can be held on a one-on-one basis or in small to large groups. Information developed for the general public is provided.
2. Conduct additional media briefings and interviews as needed.

The following tools will be developed:

- a. Media packets including information for the general public and risk communication information for journalists.
- b. Media updates.

Pandemic Period

Refer to the Santa Clara County Public Health Emergency Risk Communications Plan for a complete description of emergency risk communication implementation. This plan can be obtained through the SCVHHS Public Information Office at (408) 885-4164.

Media Preparations

Alert Period

1. Identify and train spokespersons about specific pandemic influenza emergency risk communications.
2. Conduct an informational training with members of the PIO Network.
3. Make media and emergency risk communications training available to PIO Network members.
4. Conduct orientation and operational tabletops regarding public communication function with appropriate Public Health Department and SCVHHS staff, Santa Clara County PIOs and other PIOs as identified.
5. Conduct Joint Information Center drill with the Public Health Department as the lead agency.

The following tools will be developed:

- a. Talking points.
- b. Orientation materials and briefing materials.
- c. Training format and/or outside vendor for training.
- d. Training materials.

Pandemic Period

Refer to the Santa Clara County Public Health Emergency Risk Communications Plan for a complete description of emergency risk communication implementation. This plan can be obtained through the SCVHHS Public Information Office at (408) 885-4164.

COORDINATE WITH HEALTHCARE PUBLIC INFORMATION OFFICERS

Information Packets

Alert Period

1. Develop packets of information for healthcare providers to distribute to employees, patients, clients and visitors. The packet includes Santa Clara County Public Health Department materials as well as approved outside materials. Samples of public education materials are included.

The following tools have been or will be developed:

- a. Fact Sheets – Pandemic Flu (Tool M6-4), Avian Flu (Tool M6-7), Isolation & Quarantine (Tool M6-8), Social Distancing Measures (Tool M6-9).
- b. Frequently Asked Questions (to be developed).
- c. Health Officer Q&A (Tool M6-5).

- d. Pandemic influenza updates.
 - e. Additional materials as determined and approved.
2. Educate Healthcare Public Information Officers about pandemic influenza and the Public Health Department public communications plan and operations.

The following activities will be conducted:

- a. Pandemic influenza briefing by the Health Officer.
- b. DEOC orientation by EMS Agency Staff and SCVHHS PIO.
- c. Updates and materials distributed by the Hospital Council of Northern California.

Pandemic Period

Refer to the Santa Clara County Public Health Emergency Risk Communications Plan for a complete description of emergency risk communication implementation. This plan can be obtained through the SCVHHS Public Information Office at (408) 885-4164.

Provide Current Information

Alert Period

Inform healthcare provider PIOs about Public Health Department activities as well as any new developments regarding avian and/or pandemic influenza. Healthcare PIO information will be communicated primarily through existing meetings and email.

The following tools will be utilized for providing current information:

- a. Health Officer Q&A (Tool M6-5),
- b. Pandemic influenza updates.

Pandemic Period

Refer to the Santa Clara County Public Health Emergency Risk Communications Plan for a complete description of emergency risk communication implementation. This plan can be obtained through the SCVHHS Public Information Office at (408) 885-4164.

PROVIDE INFORMATION FOR PUBLIC HEALTH DEPARTMENT STAFF MEMBERS WHO WORK WITH KEY PARTNERS

The SCVHHS Public Information Office provides support to Public Health Department staff and programs that are primarily responsible for the outreach, coordination and content development with key partners. These key partners include the following:

1. Businesses,
2. City governments,
3. Colleges and universities,
4. Community-based and faith-based organizations,
5. Coroner,
6. County government,
7. Emergency medical services and prehospital responders,
8. Environmental health,

9. Fire services,
10. San Jose International Airport,
11. County legal/court system,
12. The State Department of Health Services,
13. Law enforcement agencies including the FBI and Homeland Security,
14. Local healthcare system,
15. Mental healthcare system,
16. News media,
17. Schools.

Provide Existing Materials

Alert Period

1. Make existing materials available for distribution.
2. Key partners may use these materials for distribution to employees, customers, clients, vendors, etc.
3. In coordination with the PIO Network and the County Executive's Emergency Risk Communication Manager, develop a database for information and notification for key partner Public Information Officers, Emergency Managers and others responsible for communication activities within their organization.
4. In coordination with the PIO Network and the County Executive's Emergency Risk Communication Manager, develop a Santa Clara County secure Web site for posting of emergency preparation information, including pandemic influenza.
5. Post all information to the Public Health Department Web site.

The following tools will be provided to key partner organizations:

- a. Fact Sheets – Pandemic Flu (Tool M6-4), Avian Flu (Tool M6-7), Isolation & Quarantine (Tool M6-8), Social Distancing Measures (Tool M6-9).
- b. Frequently Asked Questions (to be developed).
- c. Health Officer Q&A (Tool M6-5).
- d. Pandemic influenza updates.
- e. Scripts.
- f. Other materials as they are needed and developed.

Key Partner Additional Materials

Alert Period

1. Develop additional materials as needed and approved for key partners.
2. Materials can be customized for particular audiences.
3. Public Health Department staff acts as the lead to provide the approved content for these materials to key partners.
4. The Pandemic Influenza Preparedness and Response Planning Team approves additional materials for production.

The following tools will be provided to key partner organizations:

- a. Q&As specifically developed for key partners.
- b. Key partner scripts.
- c. Cover Your Cough Poster (Tool M6-2).
- d. Wash Your Hands Poster (Tool M6-3).
- e. School Poster (Tool M6-10).
- f. Other tools as identified and approved.

Module VI Public Education and Emergency Risk Communication Tools

Tool M6-1: Your Guide to Preparing for Pandemic Flu

Tool M6-2: Cover Your Cough Poster

Tool M6-3: Wash Your Hands Poster

Tool M6-4: Pandemic Flu Fact Sheet

Tool M6-5: Health Officer Q&A

Tool M6-6: Home Preparedness Checklists:

General Emergency Supplies Checklist

Food Supplies Checklist

Pandemic Flu Supplies Checklist

Tool M6-7: Avian Flu Fact Sheet

Tool M6-8: Isolation & Quarantine Fact Sheet

Tool M6-9: Social Distancing Measures Fact Sheet

Tool M6-10: School Poster

