



K A N S A S

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Kansas Pandemic Influenza Preparedness and Response Plan Summary

The Kansas Department of Health and Environment (KDHE) has released the Kansas Pandemic Influenza Preparedness and Response Plan. The Plan was developed with input from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the World Health Organization (WHO).

The term “pandemic influenza” refers to a potential worldwide outbreak of a new or unusual influenza virus. People will have little or no immunity to such a virus. The goal of the plan is to minimize the effects of an influenza pandemic on Kansas. KDHE and other agencies review and update the plan at least twice a year, and exercise it once per year.

The Kansas Pandemic Influenza Preparedness and Response Plan addresses the following basic elements:

Emergency response and case management: KDHE and other agencies will investigate and manage pandemic flu cases, and communicate with the public and each other during a pandemic. Caring for the sick, limiting the spread of infection and maintaining social order will be top priorities.

Steps for Kansans to stay healthy and plan ahead for a pandemic: Frequently washing your hands, eating right and exercising are always important. These same measures will also help reduce the effect of pandemic influenza. In addition, everyone should plan ahead for a pandemic as well as other emergencies by a keeping a supply of food, water and prescription drugs on hand.

Reducing the spread of influenza viruses: During a pandemic, public activities may be canceled to reduce the likelihood of people becoming exposed to flu-causing viruses. Public health agencies, hospitals, businesses, schools, churches and other organizations will work together to minimize the effect of a pandemic.

Isolation and quarantine: “Isolation” means providing care for people who are sick while keeping them separated from others who are not sick. “Quarantine” refers to separating people who have been exposed to an illness, but who may or may not become ill. Both are measures of last resort, but are designed to reduce the spread of infection. Because people will want to keep themselves and others from becoming sick, it is generally believed that isolation and quarantine would be used on a voluntary basis, and would be most effective in the early stages of a pandemic.

Vaccines and antiviral medications, and who will receive them first: Vaccine and antiviral medications may initially be in short supply during pandemic influenza. Law enforcement officers, health care workers and others responsible for maintaining critical services may receive available vaccines and antiviral medications first so that these services can be maintained for everyone. KDHE will work with local health departments to distribute medications and vaccines as they become available, and to help maintain critical health care services.

For more information about the Kansas Pandemic Influenza Preparedness and Response Plan, please visit the KDHE Web site at www.kdheks.gov.