

PANDEMIC PREPAREDNESS:

Each Rehoboth Christian Ministries facility shall have an up-to-date plan that forms a basis for actions to be taken in the event of a pandemic. Implementation of this plan will be made by Client Services Manager in consultation with the Director of Client Services and Executive Director.

Enacting this plan should be made in consultation with, or direction of Alberta Health Services, Alberta Municipal Affairs-and/or Alberta Emergency Management Agency.

PANDEMIC PREPAREDNESS KIT CONTENT

- a. 5 - Surgical masks
- b. 1 - Box exam gloves
- c. 2 - Alcohol wipes
- d. 5 - Isolation gown
- e. 1- Garbage bag
- f. 2- Antiseptic wipes

REHOBOTH CHRISTIAN MINISTRIES PANDEMIC INFLUENZA PREPARATION PLAN

Purpose:

This framework is to be used in the event of a Pandemic Influenza and may also be suitable for use in other instances when there is an employee reduction or widespread illness affecting large numbers of clients. The information contained within this document is to be used in conjunction with the Rehoboth Christian Ministries' Policy and Procedures Manual and Service Delivery Model.

Implementation:

Implementation of this plan will be made by:

- Directors in consultation with Executive Director

Enacting this plan should be made in consultation with, or direction of Alberta Health, Alberta Municipal Affairs, and/or Alberta Emergency Management Agency.

Definitions:

- Influenza viruses are typically categorized into three types, A, B and C. **However, novel viruses may also come into being.**
- Type C Viruses are common but usually cause no symptoms or only very mild respiratory illness. These types of viruses are not considered to be a public health concern.
- Type B Viruses cause sporadic outbreaks of more severe respiratory disease particularly young children in school settings. Both B and C viruses are essentially human viruses; C viruses are stable, but A and B viruses are prone to mutation. Seasonal Influenza contains predominately Type C viruses and on occasion, Type B viruses. Most people recover completely, however, 4000 – 8000 people die in Canada each year from influenza and its complications. Both influenza viruses are easily passed from person to person
- Type A Viruses mutate more rapidly than type B viruses, giving them greater flexibility. In addition to humans, they infect pigs, horses, sea mammals and birds. They have

many subtypes, all of which are maintained in aquatic birds, providing a continuous source of viruses and a huge pool of genetic diversity. Because of their unique features, Influenza A viruses regularly cause seasonal epidemics in humans that create serious illness and excessive fatalities, especially when pneumonia is a complication. At recurring, yet unpredictable intervals, Influenza A viruses cause pandemics.

- Avian Influenza (H5N1) is a group of Influenza A viruses that cause sickness and death in birds. The World Health Organization (WHO) is concerned with this virus's deadly effect on birds and its ability to cause varying degrees of illness in humans and in some cases death. At present this virus does not transmit easily between humans. However, officials have stated that the risk of the H5N1 virus developing into the next human pandemic influenza is immediate and very real.
- Pandemic Influenza is a new strain of subtype Influenza A viruses that spreads quickly among humans worldwide due to the absence of pre-existing immunity against it. The symptoms are usually severe and result in a higher than normal death rate in the affected population. Historically, pandemic influenza has occurred three to four times per century.
- Pandemics over the past century are:
Spanish Influenza 1918-1919
Asian Influenza 1957-1958
Hong Kong Influenza 1968-1969

Assumptions / Predictions:

The following assumptions / predictions can be made about a Pandemic Influenza.

- Experience from the past influenza pandemics suggests that 25- 35% of the total population could be infected. However, for every sick child there will be a parent caring for them, and for many sick adults there will be a partner or relative who will also be affected. Therefore, we can anticipate that 30 – 55% of employees may be unable to work at any given period.
- Pandemics may last between six to eight weeks including more than one wave of illness with total duration of 12 to 18 months.
- Public Services may be disrupted. These services include hospitals, health care facilities, schools, banks, stores, municipal/provincial/federal government services, etc.
- Public gathering places (i.e. churches, community centers) may be closed.
- Once the virus is identified, it may take up to six months to develop a pandemic vaccine.
- The impact on society would be significant.

Actions to be taken:

- Plan for providing services with reduced number of employees.
- Plan to provide services to multiple clients that may be experiencing the effects of the illness at the same time.
- Plan to operate with a minimum of external support services.
- Ensure a Check-in system is in place and that isolated individuals are getting the support that is required.
- Plan to operate with a possible reduction of supplies.
- Provide education to employees, clients and guardians regarding hygiene, illness management and general health.
- Postpone or cancel all nonessential activities and services.

Staffing:

- Critically ill clients will be taken to medical facilities for care and treatment. Less ill clients will remain in their own residences if possible. Healthy clients may be relocated to other residential services or to their own family homes, where possible.
- If the situation arises, ill clients may be congregated to ensure employee resources are available, and to reduce the spread of the virus.
- Employees would be relocated from other departments to meet the support needs of the clients.
- Healthy clients may need to be congregated in larger groupings in residential or vocational services if employee resources could not adequately support clients in their environments.
- Families will be asked to take their family member home if employee resources could not meet the needs of all the clients.
- Healthy clients living in these residences would then be relocated to other suitable environments.
- In very extreme situations, (regions will determine this) vocational services could be utilized for housing of larger numbers of clients.
- Employees that are unable to come into work are expected to notify their immediate supervisor as soon as possible.
- Supervisors/Client Services Lead will educate and discuss symptoms of **the current flu virus** with employees.
- A Contact person (typically a Coordinator) will be appointed in each region, to coordinate and maintain the staff/client service model. The Contact person will work closely with the Client Services Manager to maintain staffing models.
- Supervisors/Client Services Lead will call the Contact person in each region and provide a list of employees who are not able to work, and the shift they are required to fill. Client Services Lead will follow the usual practices of securing casual employees or other employees to cover shifts.
- Employees will be paid sick leave as defined in current Policy 3.3.9. **Rehoboth will also follow any emergency procedure put in place by government procedures and through employment standards.**
- Point person (or designate) will update a regional database of all shifts that require coverage.
- In the absence of casual employees, Client Services Coordinators and Client Services Manager will determine where staffing resources would be directed.
- Consideration would be given to:
 - Individual employee skill and abilities to work with certain clientele.
 - The time that an employee typically works. Employees may be asked to work different shifts and times shortages occur in different services.

Client Services:

- All programs will be reviewed, and decisions made as to whether the program can be properly operated with the impact of reduced staffing and accessibility to community.
- Program options may be altered to decrease the need for employees in a setting or activity.
- Community activities may be decreased or cancelled, if adequate numbers of employees are not available.
- Vocational services may be relocated to the clients' homes to decrease the need for clients to be in a group environment or to decrease the need for employees if shortage exists.

Reduction of Supplies:

- Due to the projected impact on society, Rehoboth Christian Ministries will maintain a level of supplies that is consistent with two weeks of operation. The supplies include: medical gloves,

surgical masks, first aid supplies, oxygen (if required), and non-prescription medication. Other site-specific supplies will also need to be increased. These supplies will be the responsibility of the individual Client Services Lead or Client Services Coordinator.

- All residential services should be adequately stocked with non-perishable items. A minimum of one-week supply of non-perishable foods and frozen meats on hand in all homes. These supplies should only be used when regular services cannot be accessed.
- Once a pandemic has been declared by Alberta Health Services, Client Services Manager will instruct Client Services Coordinators to ensure that supplies are present in each home. Client Services Lead or designate will be responsible to purchase/secure items such as:

Goods Required:

- Food Supplies (one-week supply)
 - Bottled water – at least four liters of water per person per day
 - Ready-to-eat canned meats
 - High energy foods: granola bars, fruit/nut mixture, peanut butter
 - Canned goods: meat, fish, pasta, bottled sauces, soup, stew, vegetables, fruits
 - Instant soup mixes, instant cereals, crackers, biscuits
 - Beverages such as fruit juices, evaporated or powdered milk, UHT milk, coffee, tea, hot chocolate mix
 - Staples such as salt, pepper, sugar, honey, jam and spices
 - frozen meats
- Household items (minimum two-week supply would be maintained)
 - Paper products: toilet paper, paper towel, facial tissue
 - Gloves, rubber and disposal
- Cleaning supplies: bleach, cleaners, mop heads, rags, laundry detergent, dish soap, hand soap
- Health Supplies
 - Prescribed medications - ensure PRN information for each client is up to date and accurate.
 - Non-prescribed medications such as pain relievers, fever medications, cough and cold, stomach remedies, anti-diarrhea medication, vitamins.
 - Prescribed medical supplies such as: glucose and blood pressure monitoring equipment, disposable diaper
- First Aid
 - Ensure existing kit is completely stocked
 - Ensure each home and work area (administration and vocational services) has a thermometer
 - Each home and work area (administration and vocational services) has a supply of waterless antiseptic hand agent (minimum 60% alcohol based) to use when hand washing isn't readily available.

Education:

- An education program will be developed for employee, clients and guardians. This program is to cover the following areas:
 - Key Facts and symptoms of **current Flu or Virus**
 - Proper hand hygiene
 - Social distancing
 - Respiratory hygiene (cough/sneeze etiquette)

- How to help prevent the spread of the illness
- General good health
- Alternate work arrangements
- Workplace cleaning and environmental decontamination
- Restriction from workplace of employees demonstrating pandemic influenza symptoms
- The education process for these topics will be dealt with through open conversations, information included in employee pay cheques, team meetings, parent/guardian meetings, and posters located in all facilities.
- It is understood that the best prevention in spreading or becoming ill is proper hand washing. Posters outlining the proper technique for hand washing are posted in each washroom in all facilities operated by Rehoboth Christian Ministries.
- Posters outlining proper cough/sneeze etiquette have been posted throughout all facilities operated by Rehoboth Christian Ministries.
- Staff in the day program and residences have and are encouraged to continue discussing proper hygiene practices with the clients.
- It is expected that employees and clients experiencing flu-like symptoms will remain at home until their health improves.
- Employees and clients are encouraged to follow good eating habits as outlined by the Canada Food Guide and follow an appropriate exercise routine. The Canada Food Guide has been distributed to all residential facilities. Exercise activities within the residences are to continue based on the health of the clients.

Nonessential Activities and Services:

- All nonessential activities and services will be suspended at the discretion of the Client Services Manager in consultation with the **Client Services Director**.
- These services may include but are not limited to:
 - In-house transportation.
 - Community activities except for medical appointments.
 - Long distance travel or vacations.
 - Vocational services.
 - Respite services.
 - Evening and weekend recreational activities.
- All suspended services or programs will be reviewed by the Client Services Manager and Client Services Director and appropriate Client Services Coordinator before resuming.

POST-PANDEMIC INFLUENZA STAGE PROCEDURES

1. Be prepared to help clients deal with mental health issues and health conditions resulting from the pandemic.

- Post-traumatic stress disorder can arise after a person experiences a traumatic event such as a loss of a loved one or sudden changes in their daily living. Information on recognizing this and steps to provide comfort and support can be found in Appendix D and E. For more information click on the link **below**.
- Pneumonia - "lung care."
Encourage clients to see their physician or nurse practitioner immediately if they have the following symptoms:
 - Shortness of breath while resting or doing very little

- Difficult or painful breathing
- Coughing up bloody spit/phlegm
- Wheezing
- Chest pain
- Fever for three to four days without improvement
- Feeling better, then suddenly having a high fever or becoming ill again
- Extreme drowsiness and difficulty awakening
- Disorientation or confusion
- Severe earache
- Sudden inability to function, especially in a normally independent, elderly person.
- Constant vomiting, especially in an elderly person.

Any health questions can be directed to Health Link.

- **811 – where applicable**
- 1 (866) 408 5465
- Calgary (403) 943 LINK (5465)
- Edmonton (780) 408 LINK (5465)

2. Be prepared to help clients and employees with the grieving process.

- Provide information on funeral or memorial services to be held
- Community memorial.
 - Agency-specific.
 - Ethno-cultural considerations.
- Dealing with loss.

3. Resumption to normalcy

Keeping current with community and regional trends, and outcomes as well as re-establishing a number of contacts for both the agency and its clients.

Review and update links to:

- Other agencies (social workers, outreach workers)
- Physicians, community nurses
- Employers
- Staff
- Friends and family
- Community members

4. Continue to support updated immunization, hand washing and other disease prevention strategies such as personal health practices.

5. Establish an evaluation process to look at lessons learned for future emergency situations.

References:

Alberta Health Services - <https://www.albertahealthservices.ca/topics/Page16944.aspx>,

Government of Alberta - <https://www.alberta.ca/coronavirus-info-for-albertans.aspx>

Government of Canada - <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/2019-novel-coronavirus-infection.html>

Pandemic Planning – <https://www.ccohs.ca/publications/PDF/businesscontinuity.pdf>

Travel Health Notices – <https://travel.gc.ca/travelling/health-safety/travel-health-notice>