

Planning Guide for Pandemic Influenza

Prepared by FIU Biosafety Office

INTRODUCTION

In the event of an influenza pandemic, FIU's response strategy will help to protect the health and safety of employees and students, as well as influence the impact on the surrounding communities.

What is the likely impact on the university?

In the event of a pandemic, the FIU community is likely to experience the following:

- ◆ Absenteeism: Employees may be sick, taking care of sick family members or children if daycares and schools are closed, or afraid to come to work. If ill or tending to an ill family member, employees may be asked not to return to work for at least 7-10 days or until they are well and can no longer spread the infection. This determination will be made by their physician or the FIU Office of Emergency Management
 - Dismissal of students from classes, cessation of student activities, and closure of public schools and childcare facilities for up to 12 weeks may also affect an FIU employee's attendance
- ◆ Disruption of FIU operations: Inability to maintain some operations due to inadequate staffing
- ◆ Disruption of delivery/supply services: Goods and services may be delayed or cancelled

Criteria for university closure:

Closure decisions should be based on the severity of the pandemic and the recommended actions of public health officials. According to the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), the current three-tiered planning approach, based on the CDC Pandemic Severity Index, is as follows:

- ◆ Category 1 pandemic (less than 0.1% CFR*) – no dismissals
- ◆ Category 2-3 pandemic (0.1-1% CFR) - short-term (up to 4 weeks) dismissal from classes
- ◆ Category 4-5 pandemic (1- 2% or higher CFR) - cessation of classes for up to 12 weeks.

*CFR = *Case Fatality Ratio or the percentage of deaths out of the total reported cases of the disease*

Preparation and prevention are important factors in reducing the effects of a pandemic on FIU operations, employees, students, and the general public. The following guidelines are based on recommendations issued by the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) and the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA).

SCOPE

University-wide

GUIDELINES

I. FIU Departmental Units (in consultation with the Office of Emergency Management and Human Resources)

- ◆ Establish procedures for employees who may need to stay home due to a sick family member or school closures (children)
- ◆ Encourage employees to stay home if they are sick or have been exposed as a result of taking care of an ill family member
- ◆ Encourage good hygiene in the workplace – cough/sneeze etiquette, frequent hand-washing, use of alcohol-based hand sanitizers, and social distancing – see attached
- ◆ Develop a unit-specific plan for alternate staffing based on identification of critical job functions that may be affected by prolonged absences during the pandemic
- ◆ Ensure that unit plans are consistent with already established university emergency operations plan
- ◆ Ensure staff emergency contact information is up-to-date
- ◆ Preserve a healthy workplace by limiting large social gatherings, encouraging alternatives to face-to-face meetings, and staggering work-shifts for employees in shared workstations

- ◆ Become familiar with procedures for observation of illness and how to respond if a staff member or student becomes ill
- ◆ For research areas, review plans for maintaining research labs and animal care facilities during prolonged absences
- ◆ Ensure infection prevention supplies (soap, alcohol-based hand hygiene products, tissues, cleaning supplies, etc) are stocked and readily accessible

II. FIU Administration

- ◆ Establish procedures for informing students and employees on pandemic status and status of classes and other university activities
- ◆ Plan to have only essential central office functions (such as payroll, maintenance, Public Safety) operational during a pandemic
- ◆ Establish procedures unique to pandemic influenza for sick leave, flexible work schedules, and working from home.
- ◆ Identify and review the university's legal responsibilities and authorities for case identification, reporting illnesses, isolation, movement restrictions, and provision of healthcare on campus
- ◆ Monitor local, state, and federal websites or hotlines for updates on pandemic status

III. FIU Academic and Student Services

- ◆ Ensure student contact information on file (email, telephone number, address) is current
- ◆ Provide information to students on accessing University Health Services staff as a consultation resource
- ◆ Develop alternatives to continuing student instruction – distance learning, mailed lessons and assignments etc, in preparation for university closure
- ◆ Establish procedures for continuation of services for students who rely on residential housing and food services (international students, students who live too far from home)
- ◆ Disseminate information covering potential impact of a pandemic on student services, routine infection control (hand hygiene, cough/sneeze etiquette) and pandemic influenza basics (symptoms, modes of transmission)

III. FIU Utility Operations

- ◆ Develop procedures for shut down and decontamination of affected facilities
- ◆ Ensure custodial personnel have been trained on disinfection and cleaning as it relates to a pandemic event
- ◆ Review, and revise if necessary, procedures for proper maintenance of HVAC systems (adequate amounts of outside air; reduce the amount of re-circulated air)

RESOURCES

www.pandemicflu.gov – Department of Health and Human Services
Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Hotline: 1-800-CDC-INFO
OSHA – Guidelines on Preparing Workplaces for an Influenza Pandemic