

## PANDEMIC INFLUENZA PLANNING: A GUIDE FOR SMALL BUSINESS OWNERS AND MANAGERS

### JUST IMAGINE...

"Imagine that ten to 50 percent of your employees are too sick to come to work on any given day. Imagine that cumulatively, 40 percent of your workforce could be absent for as many as three to four months. Imagine that the other businesses you rely on are facing the same massive absentee rates." -US Chamber of Commerce

### HOW WILL YOU PREPARE?

### HOW WILL YOU RESPOND?

### HOW WILL YOU RECOVER?

- ✓ *How would your business be impacted if up to 40% of your staff were absent from work for a period of weeks or months?*
- ✓ *If the schools were closed due to pandemic, how many of your healthy staff would likely need to stay home to care for children?*
- ✓ *If 25%-40% of your staff were off the job for a period of weeks, how would you prioritize business functions? What activities are most essential and what could be slowed down or stopped?*
- ✓ *How will you handle sick leave and payroll continuity for your staff in the event of long-term absenteeism due to pandemic illness? If an employee came to work with symptoms of flu, would you enforce immediate mandatory sick leave? Do your policies cover this?*
- ✓ *What external resources does your business count on for operations? What if the products or services that your business relies on were unavailable or available in only a limited way for an extended period of time?*
- ✓ *If the Health Officer communicated to you that social distancing measures were crucial to preventing the spread of an epidemic, could staff that are not ill work effectively from home?*
- ✓ *Can your customers or clients access you remotely? What steps would you take to reduce face-to-face contact if social distancing measures were mandated? How would you get updates and information to your customers so they know what to expect?*
- ✓ *Would demand for your product or services fall or rise if your community and surrounding communities experienced a 6-8 week epidemic of influenza? What would it take to accommodate the resulting impact on your business?*
- ✓ *Does your business insurance include a "business interruption" clause? Is pandemic influenza covered within that clause?*
- ✓ *Does your business have tangible or human resources that might be useful to others in a pandemic?*

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### NOW IS A GREAT TIME TO BEGIN YOUR PLANNING!

- Review the CDC Business Pandemic Influenza Checklist, and identify the issues most salient to your business based on your size and the nature of your work
- Plan for the impact of a pandemic on your business.
- Plan for the impact of a pandemic on your employees and customers.
- A simple matrix can help you capture your planning work. Create three columns: “issue or concern,” “planned response,” and “person responsible.”
- Identify reliable sources of information and guidance to support your planning process. Some good ones are listed below.
- Educate yourself and our associates on different scenarios and think through how they might impact your business operations.
- Enlist outside assistance to review your plan, e.g. legal counsel.
- Once you have a plan, don't forget to communicate about it with others including staff, suppliers, other businesses, and the health district.

### RELIABLE INFORMATION SOURCES INCLUDE:

- US Government; [www.pandemicflu.gov](http://www.pandemicflu.gov)
- Center for Disease Control; [www.cdc.gov/business](http://www.cdc.gov/business)
- Island County Health Department website; [www.islandcounty.net/health/index.htm](http://www.islandcounty.net/health/index.htm)
- Washington State Department of Health website; [www.doh.wa.gov/panflu/](http://www.doh.wa.gov/panflu/)
- US Chamber of Commerce: [http://www.uschamber.com/issues/index/defense/pandemic\\_influenza.htm](http://www.uschamber.com/issues/index/defense/pandemic_influenza.htm)

