

Halton Region

Pandemic Influenza Response Plan



A "TOOL KIT" For Business Continuity



Message from the Chairman

At Halton Region, our responsibilities for the community are met both by planning for the future and learning from the past. And nowhere is this more evident than in the work performed by Halton's Public Health Department to address the issue of pandemic influenza.

For many of us, the term "influenza" brings thoughts of epidemics that occurred last century. Past influenza pandemics include the Spanish Flu of 1918, the Asian Flu of 1957 and the Hong Kong Flu as recent as 1968. The historical significance of the three pandemics of the 20th Century illustrate the magnitude of the disease and provide a barometer for us to gauge the subsequent ripple effects that a pandemic would have on Halton. Experts estimate that as much as 30% of the population would be made ill by a pandemic, which in turn would severely threaten our workforce and the local economy.



Halton's response to the pandemic has been developed in cooperation and consultation with the World Health Organization (WHO) and the Provincial and Federal Governments, each of whom has specific jurisdictions. The WHO first identified the threat of a pandemic and established a template checklist for health care responders. The Province's focus will be to lead communications efforts, recognizing that influenza, by the nature of the disease, is impervious to geographical boundaries. The Federal Government's role as the decision-making body is to determine priorities for receiving the first round of anti-viral medications and vaccines. Health care workers, emergency responders, the very young and the elderly are all identified as primary recipients.

Halton's pandemic influenza response plan was recently updated to ensure it was aligned with Provincial and Federal models and the latest international developments in pandemic planning. Regional Council's endorsement of the plan also recognized it as a model for local municipalities, hospitals, school boards and the private sector in developing their own contingency plans. This led to the creation of this tool kit, which is to be used as a guide to help you prepare your own pandemic influenza response plan.

Halton will continue to work with all of our emergency response partners to mitigate the impacts in the event of a pandemic influenza. Our priority, as always, is the health and safety of our residents and continued economic well-being of our community!

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Disclaimer: This “Tool Kit” is intended to be a guide only. Halton Region is not responsible for any errors, omissions, misuse, and/or misinterpretation.

Pandemic Influenza Response Plan

Business Continuity Planning “Tool Kit”

Background

Influenza has been with us for centuries. It causes severe illness and death every winter in North America, attacking the elderly and the debilitated with particular ferocity. Every winter, outbreaks of influenza in hospitals and long-term care homes require public health resources to control the spread and minimize the impact of influenza.



Outbreaks of influenza have been known to occur for centuries, and three influenza pandemics have occurred in the previous century alone – the Spanish (1918), Asian (1957) and Hong Kong (1968) pandemics. The Spanish pandemic, in two short years, killed an estimated 20 million people world-wide with some experts reporting deaths as high as 40 million. Entire towns were devastated and many families were wiped out as a result of influenza. Physicians tending to soldiers in military camps wrote letters home about young healthy men who came to the infirmary with a cough in the morning and were dead by nightfall. This virus quickly made its way around the globe.

Experts are predicting that another pandemic influenza will occur although the timing and pattern of the pandemic is unpredictable. When it does, the impact will be devastating. Estimates suggest up to 8 million people in Ontario will be infected. Of the people infected, up to 4 million will be clinically ill and 12,000 will die – an emergency of catastrophic proportions!

In terms of preparing for the impact of a pandemic in the work environment, it has been projected that up to 30 - 35% of the workforce may be absent due to the effects of this virus on individuals and families. This clearly identifies the importance for agencies and businesses to prepare plans to ensure continuity of essential services.

Based on information taken from previous pandemics, the impact of a pandemic influenza in Halton (based a population of 400,000 and a 35% attack rate) could be:

- 300,000 people become infected
- 140,000 people become clinically ill
- 60,000 people require outpatient care
- 1,200 people require hospitalization
- 400 deaths

Work has occurred at the federal level that has resulted in the development of a contingency plan, which reflects the role of the federal government in a pandemic influenza response. Similarly, at the provincial level, the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care has undertaken a planning process in collaboration with various stakeholders for an Ontario response to a pandemic influenza.

Given the federal and provincial forecasts, municipalities across Ontario need to prepare for such an event. Halton Region, together with specific stakeholders, has been actively preparing for this event for several years so that Halton will be positioned to meet the challenges of an pandemic influenza, whenever it occurs.

The next step in this process is the development of Business Continuity Plans to maintain essential services and/or functions during a pandemic emergency. For both government and business, there is an expectation from the public and from employees, that services will continue as usual and uninterrupted. In this context, the experiences and disruptions created by the 2003 Power Outage and the SARS outbreak emphasize the benefits of the emergency planning process.

Your agency/organization could be faced with the extremely high absenteeism rates during a pandemic influenza. For this reason, you should be planning ahead to ensure you have the capacity to maintain service delivery during that time.

Response plans are necessary to ensure business continuity is maintained during a pandemic. To help with this, the “TOOL KIT” for Business Continuity has been prepared to make the planning process easy and to provide a consistent approach for all those involved.

This kit will lead you through the process of identifying:

- Your essential services
- Required staffing needs to keep essential services running
- Staff skill sets in your organization
- Opportunities for reallocation of staff to fill positions vacant due to absenteeism during a pandemic emergency

The “TOOL KIT” provides you with all the resources you will require to develop your organization’s Business Continuity Plan.

Pandemic Influenza Business Continuity Planning Process

The Business Continuity Planning (BCP) Process consists of the following steps:

1. Establish a Corporate Steering Committee or individual to oversee the planning process
2. Establish a Business Continuity Planning Committee or Working Group
3. Identify Essential Services/Functions (See definition on page 5)
4. Identify required skill sets and opportunities for staff reallocation
5. Identify any relevant issues/implications for implementation
6. Prepare a Business Continuity Plan for each essential service/function
7. Compare with the “Preparedness Checklist” (Appendix F page 16)
8. Review your Business Continuity Plan with the Corporate Steering Committee
9. Revise, test the plan and update as required

STEP 1: Corporate Steering Committee or Individual

Corporate Support and Commitment:

The primary key to the success of any initiative of this significance is corporate support and commitment. Corporate leaders, through their actions, communications, priority setting and direction, must instill the importance of pandemic influenza business continuity planning throughout the corporation. This may require some direct communication and training/education on the subject matter.

The very first step in the planning process is to establish a Corporate Steering Committee or person to oversee, support and/or direct the process. The steering committee should establish a “terms of reference” with timelines. The corporate committee/representative will also provide a valuable review forum as work proceeds towards developing a Business Continuity Plan. Documentation throughout the process is highly recommended. There are several templates in the appendices of this document that can facilitate your documentation needs during a pandemic planning process.

In addition to a Corporate Steering Committee, it is recommended that your organization establish a Business Continuity Planning Committee (Working Group) that will be responsible for developing the Business Continuity Plan.

STEP 2: BCP Committee/Working Group

Representation on this committee/working group is very important. Participants should be able to identify essential services/functions and understand the implications of service disruptions.

The following points should be considered when establishing the committee/working group:

- Use an existing committee/working group that may already be in place that deals with emergency planning issues
- If necessary, establish a new committee/group to conduct the Business Continuity planning process
- The committee/group members should be senior members of the organization with decision making authority
- Representatives from each business unit should be involved and must be able to identify the resources, issues and solutions related to the Business Continuity planning process
- Representatives must understand the reporting structure and decision-making process within their respective Division/Department/Corporation.
- Develop a “terms of reference” and submit to the Corporate Steering Committee for review/approval
- Involve union/association representatives if relevant

The Working Group should review the templates contained in the appendices and make any changes to suit the needs of their business unit. The templates, in addition to serving as a tool for essential services/functions identification as outlined in Step 3, can be used to as a documentation tool.

STEP 3: Identify Essential Services/Functions

The objective of the Business Continuity planning process is to determine how an organization will maintain essential services/functions in the event of significant staff absenteeism.

To begin the discussions related to essential services/functions, it is important to reach a common understanding of what determines an “essential service and/or function”.

Essential Service is defined as follows:

- A service and/or function that when not delivered creates an impact on the health and safety of individuals.
- A service and/or function that may lead to the failure of a business unit if activities are not performed in a specified time period.

In some organizations there are also essential services and/or functions that must be performed to satisfy regulatory requirements. Also, depending on the nature of the service and/or function, the impact may be immediate or may occur over a certain time period.

Experts suggest that during pandemic influenza, organizations may experience staff absenteeism rates of 30 - 35 % for extended periods of time. This figure does not include the “sympathetic sick”, (i.e., people that may be required to stay home to care for ill family members.) This means that organizations may be forced to modify, reduce, or even eliminate specific services/functions to cope with the impacts of a pandemic emergency. The impact of staff absenteeism rates may be across the organization or localized to specific business units.

As you begin discussions about essential services/functions, you may find that you have existing resources that you can use to extract information about essential services in your organization (e.g., emergency plans, Y2K plan etc.) You may recall that the focus for emergency planning during Y2K was on contingency plans to deal with equipment and technical disruption. For pandemic influenza, the focus is on how to maintain essential services from a staffing perspective. Your experiences during the 2003 Power Outage may also be helpful in identifying essential services.

Another important element of the business continuity planning process is to identify, not only the generally accepted essential services/functions, but also any additional services/functions that will be created as a result of the pandemic influenza response. This type of service is generally referred to as “surge activity” or “enhanced services demands”. (For example - increased demand for customer service due to service interruptions resulting from staff shortages.) This area will have a significant impact on Health and Emergency Services departments.

The following steps may help your organization identify essential services/functions:

- Identify all the services/functions performed by the business units.
- Identify any “surge activities” that may be created or increased as a result of the pandemic influenza response.
- Identify any services that may be done from home and/or by external sources (contracted out).
- Sort the services/functions by department/division and/or the business unit into three categories.

The first category should contain the essential services /functions (Priority A).

The second category should contain the services/functions (Priority B) that can be suspended for a short period of time (for example, services that can be suspended for one month)

The third category should contain services/functions that can be suspended for an extended period of time (Priority C). This may require a corporate overview.

You have now identified your “Essential Services/Functions”.

STEP 4: Identify Required Skill Sets and Staff Allocation

A critical step in the Business Continuity Planning process is to identify the number of staff and necessary skills required to perform and maintain the essential services/functions.

This information will be vital when it becomes necessary to reallocate staff resources within the business unit or across the Corporation. The following steps may help:

- Identify the number of staff (by classification) required to maintain the essential services/functions. Include essential services/functions created or increased by the “surge activity”. Examples of staff classifications include customer service agents, electricians, chartered accountants or data entry clerks.
- Identify any special requirements necessary to perform the essential services/functions (for example, license to operate heavy machinery.)

Continue to use the document in Appendix B as you move through the process of identifying staff allocations for essential services/functions. This will help you capture the information necessary to develop your plan.

STEP 5: Identify Any Relevant Issues/Implications for Implementation

An important step in the process is to identify any issues and/or implications that may result from, or be created through any essential service/function reduction, modification, and/or elimination.

Each should be discussed and any relevant comments/solution should be documented.

It is recommended that part of this process include documentation and a planned response for each essential service/function. (Priority A list)

You may find the following list useful when developing your plan and documenting the responsibilities of designated individuals within the business unit for the identified essential services/functions. (This provides a quick overview of key areas to consider. The Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care has also prepared a Emergency Preparedness Checklist which is in Appendix F)

A sample template to facilitate the documentation of action plans required for an essential service is included in Appendix E.

Activation of Plan

- Has a notification system been documented to activate/terminate the contingency plan?
- Who has the decision-making authority and what are the identified essential services/functions?
- Who are their alternates if they are unavailable?

Planning

- Have there been discussions with key external partners regarding their pandemic readiness plans for business continuity?
- Is there a need to involve external individuals in the preparation and review of a Business Continuity Plan for your organization (e.g., elected officials, unions, legal counsel etc.)?
- Has the process for decision-making been reviewed and documented?
- Have all relevant issues/implications and action plans been documented?
- Have alternatives to face-to-face group meetings during an pandemic emergency been considered? This is particularly important to prevent the spread of influenza as it is transmitted easily from person to person, (before a person begins to exhibit symptoms) through coughing and sneezing, or through contact with contaminated surfaces such as unwashed hands, phones, and eating utensils.
- Have plans been developed for potential work alternatives such as alternate work sites for key people at risk, and the possibility of working from home arrangements?
- Has each essential service been reviewed to consider the implications of service modifications, reductions and/or elimination?

Policies and Procedures

- Have existing Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) been reviewed and modified and/or revised as needed?

Surveillance/Attendance

- Is there a process established that would monitor staff absenteeism within each business unit?
- What level of staff absenteeism will necessitate a change to the delivery of any essential service/function?
- If your organization can no longer function due to extremely high absenteeism, what are the implications and what business unit/divisions would still be required to continue (e.g. Finance, Human Resources) to provide employee support?

Delivery of Essential Services to the Community

- Does your agency/business have a responsibility for providing services to the community during an emergency?

Delivery of Services

- What are the implications when a specific essential service/function needs to be modified? (Consider direct community impact with reduction in services.)
- Identify any options that may exist in order to maintain each essential service/function such as cancellation of vacations, approval of overtime, re-deployment of staff, cross-training, contracting services out, volunteers, part-time staff, retired staff, other staff resources, mutual aid, etc...
- Consider the sustainability of service reductions for a period of a number of weeks or months.

Human Resources

- Will cross training be required?
- Do re-deployed staff and/or volunteers require any security checks or special clearance?
- Are single incumbent positions, security codes, access and passwords an issue? Do you have staff from other areas that can be re-allocated to these types of positions?
- Are there issues related to a collective agreement?
- Do you require any advance approval to use staff that may not possess the necessary certifications, licence, etc?
- What are the implications pertaining to: due diligence, liability (legal/civil), public image and confidence?
- Has a list of resource needs been developed including procurement of people, equipment/materials, source and contact information for each?

Communications

- Have you prepared a “Communication Strategy”, for internal and external partners?

Testing the Plan

- Has the Business Continuity Plan for your organization/business been tested?
- Has a process been established to conduct regular reviews of the Business Continuity Plan for your organization/business?

STEP 6: Documentation for each Essential Service/Function

The documentation of decisions and actions for each essential service/function is the final step in drafting a Business Continuity Plan. This step should be taken once you have:

- Identified essential services/functions
- Identified any relevant issues/implications that may arise when the level of service/function is modified

This portion of the plan details how each of the essential service/function is maintained, reduced, modified and/or eliminated, who has decision making authority, what solutions will be put in place, any necessary actions to follow and any communication strategy. A template has been provided in Appendix E to document this process.

STEP 7: Compare to the “Preparedness Checklist”

Review the Preparedness Checklist items (Appendix F) to ensure that all issues have been addressed such as the decision-making process/authority for implementing service reduction. As part of this review, additional documentation may be required to ensure that all critical elements have been addressed. Some of the issues may fit best in your overall organizational emergency response plan.

STEP 8: Review with the Corporate Steering Committee

A draft of the Business Continuity Plan should be presented to your Corporate Steering Committee for review and/or comment. This will help establish consistency for all business units/departments in the Business Continuity planning process and ensure that all critical elements in the plan are addressed. In addition, the Corporate Steering Committee will monitor the progress of the initiative and develop a better understanding of the overall corporate impact of a pandemic influenza emergency.

STEP 9: Revise, Test the Plan and Update

Once the Business Continuity Plan is complete, you need to circulate the plan for information and training purposes within your organization. As with any other plans, the Business Continuity Plan will require at the least, an annual review for any necessary revisions.

Last but not least, conducting an emergency exercise to test the plan will help your staff understand the Business Continuity Plan, how and when it’s activated, who is responsible for what, and how it fits with your Corporate strategy to deal with a pandemic influenza emergency.

Appendix A:

Essential Service Response Priority Listing

Complete the attached form (Appendix B) by working through the following process. A completed template is provided as an example.

1. Identify all services/activities within a program/division/business unit area and list them in the column identified as Service/Activity.
2. Identify the services with an 'A' in the priority number column for those that must be maintain throughout staffing shortages; use 'B' for services that can be discontinued for a short period of time, such as 4 weeks; and 'C', for services that can be discontinued during the entire pandemic influenza due to staffing shortages.
3. List the 'A' services together. List the 'B' services together. List the 'C' services together.
4. Identify and describe the type of staff needed to deliver the services (for example: electricians, chartered accountants or information technologists). Fill in the additional columns as required if more than one group of staff are involved in the delivery of the essential service/activity.
5. Indicate the number of staff currently assigned to the service/activity.
6. Identify the number of staff remaining in the event of a 35% staff absence rate and record the number in the column "FTEs available at 35% absence".
7. Identify whether the service/activity is expected to experience a surge in demand during a pandemic.
8. Indicate whether there is a potential to have the service/activity delivered by other sector assistance. This can include volunteers, the private sector, or other agencies.
9. Indicate whether the service/activity can potentially be performed from home.
10. Develop a plan for dealing with each essential service/activity to respond to staffing shortfalls or surge demands. A sample template is provided in Appendix C (pg. 13).

Appendix C: Sample Completed Template Essential Services/Functions Staffing Allocations

Priority No.	Service /Activity	Current # of Nursing staff	Number Remaining With 35% Absenteeism	Current # of clerical staff	Number Remaining With 35% Absenteeism	Current # of Inspection staff	Number Remaining With 35% Absenteeism	Potential for Surge Increase	Private Sector Assistance	Work From Home Potential
A	Immunization clinics	8	5	3	2	-	-	Yes	Yes	No
A	Inspections of restaurants	-	-	-	-	9	6	-	No	No
A	Customer Service	3	2	1	None	3	2	Yes	No	Yes
A	Disease investigations	3	2	2	1.5	3	2	Yes	No	No
A	Medication distribution	1	None	1	None	-	-	Yes	Yes	No
B	Inspection of Pools	-	-	-	-	3	2			
B	Travel Health Clinics	3	2	1	None	-	-			
C	Education Programs	1	None	-	-	3	2			

Staffing resources from B and C identified services/activities can be reallocated to staff A priority services/activities during periods of increased staffing absenteeism and surge increases.

Appendix D:

Action Plan for Maintaining Essential Service/Activity

An action plan for each essential service/activity should be documented during the planning process (one page for each essential service). The action plan should include details about:

- The essential service/activity
- Key emergency staff (i.e., the individual(s) responsible for implementing the action plan)
- Details of the activation procedure
- Identification of corporate and community impact issues
- Reallocation potentials of staff from other service/activity areas
- Communication strategy to staff, business partners and customers/community
- Staff absenteeism monitoring activities
- Reporting requirements to decision makers
- Decision making process during a pandemic influenza
- Resource needs including a listing of contact information for the following:
 - Staff list and contact information
(for notification and communication purposes)
 - Private sector contact information
(for purchasing equipment, obtaining additional staffing resources etc.)

Appendix E: Action Plan Template for Maintaining Essential Service/Activity

Business Group:			
Essential Service: (Identify and provide brief description)			
Individual/Position Responsible for implementing specific action plan	(Name)	(Phone Numbers)	(Email Address)
Activation Procedure: (describe)			
Corporate and Community impact issues (list any)			
Action Plan (list action plan including, notifications plans, communications strategy, staffing reallocations plans, use of other sector services, any change in scope of service delivery, monitoring and reporting needs, etc)			
Resource Needs: (list needs and contact information for resource needs – staffing, equipment, contracting out services)	(Name and Business Address)	(Phone Numbers)	(Email Address)
Training Needs (outline training plan as required)			

Appendix F:
Preparedness Checklist for your Agency/Business prepared by the
Ontario Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care

Roles and Responsibilities for a Pandemic Influenza Business Continuity Plan	Check whether the action is addressed in the Plan	Document who is responsible for each action/decision making process
Business Continuity Plan		
Who has responsibility for activating the Business Continuity Plan for your organization and who is that person's back up?		
Has your organization identified a process through which the decision will be made to activate and terminate the Plan?		
Do you have a communication strategy for reaching employees and business partners as a result of having to implement any section of the Business Continuity Plan?		
Planning		
Who do you need input from both internally and externally to prepare and review a Business Continuity Plan for your agency/business? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Elected officials • Legal counsel • Community partners • Labour Unions and bargaining agents 		

Roles and Responsibilities for a Pandemic Influenza Business Continuity Plan	Check whether the action is addressed in the Plan	Document who is responsible for each action/decision making process
Who is in charge in the event of a pandemic episode and are the roles of the various stakeholders clearly defined? Who makes what decisions? Who notifies the various stakeholders?		
Is the Pandemic Influenza Business Continuity Plan integrated with your emergency preparedness plan(s)?		
Who has responsibility for procurement matters, e.g., ordering resources and/or equipment during an emergency episode?		
Who needs to approve the Business Continuity Plan?		
Testing of the Plan		
How will you test and/or evaluate your Business Continuity Response Plan?		
How will you test your communication systems, e.g., fan-out?		
Decision-making and Reporting		
Who will be in charge and make decisions within your agency/business concerning services during a pandemic/emergency episode?		
What will be the mechanism for regular reporting to your management staff/Boards/Government (whichever are appropriate for your organization) councils during a pandemic episode?		

Roles and Responsibilities for a Pandemic Influenza Business Continuity Plan	Check whether the action is addressed in the Plan	Document who is responsible for each action/decision making process
Is there a contact list of all internal and external client and partner agencies and stakeholders?		
Is there a contact list of all senior staff within your agency/business?		
If public transportation became a problem, can employees arrange alternate forms of transportation to work?		
If necessary, could staff live at the work location or alternative work location for some period of time?		
Have you prepared site-specific notification for office closures and contacts for the public/clients?		
Surveillance/Attendance		
Who in your organization has responsibility for collecting/managing information about staff absenteeism? Who is that person's back up?		
Do you have data on the average number of staff absences due to illness and vacation at different times of the year (monthly rates)?		
Is there a mechanism within your agency/business to monitor and report increasing staff absenteeism due to illness to health authorities (e.g., Health and Safety Coordinator, Health Department)? (An increase in staff absenteeism due to illness might be attributed to the spread of infections among co-workers suggesting an outbreak of disease.)		

Roles and Responsibilities for a Pandemic Influenza Business Continuity Plan	Check whether the action is addressed in the Plan	Document who is responsible for each action/decision making process
<p>Delivery of Essential Services to the Community</p> <p>Does your agency/business have a responsibility for the provision of services to the community during an emergency?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provision of food • Mass housing • Care for special needs people • Home care and child care 		
<p>Have these services been planned for should there be a staff reduction due to absence?</p>		
<p>Who has signing authority for expenditures during an emergency and who is that person's back up?</p>		
<p>Are there clearly stated policies and procedures that cover signing authority and acquisitions?</p>		
<p>What is the staff capacity of your agency/business and are there provisions to bring in additional staff and/or volunteers?</p>		
<p>Have alternative service providers been identified to assist with maintaining your essential services? What duties will they have and what additional training will they require? Have insurance coverage and union issues been addressed?</p>		
<p>What is the surge capacity of services delivered by your agency/business?</p>		
<p>Has an inventory been prepared for specialized equipment/facilities that may be needed during a pandemic episode?</p>		

Roles and Responsibilities for a Pandemic Influenza Business Continuity Plan	Check whether the action is addressed in the Plan	Document who is responsible for each action/decision making process
Is there a mechanism that will ensure that additional equipment, e.g., pagers, cell phones, refrigerators etc. can be obtained with minimum delay?		
Who has authority for ordering repair/replacement equipment and who is that person's back up?		
Materials and Supplies		
Are you currently stocked with all necessary supplies for regular day-to-day functions?		
Does your agency/business have contact lists for all your suppliers and alternate suppliers?		
Does your agency/business have access to inventory (including serial numbers) of all computer equipment, printers, fax machines, photocopy machines in case repairs are needed?		
Does your agency/business have contact lists for all equipment repair persons?		
Who authorizes repairs and supply/equipment orders? Are there other employees who can take over this responsibility in the event of an emergency?		
Training/Orientation		
What are the training needs pertaining to emergency and pandemic flu contingency plans for internal and external business partners/agencies? What additional training will be required?		

Roles and Responsibilities for a Pandemic Influenza Business Continuity Plan	Check whether the action is addressed in the Plan	Document who is responsible for each action/decision making process
What orientation/education should be arranged for your employees to raise awareness about a pandemic flu emergency?		
Has staff been made aware of basic infection control guidelines to prevent the transmission of influenza? (e.g., handwashing procedures etc.)		
Delivery of Services		
Have services in your agency/business been prioritized to take into account minor to major staff absences due to illness?		
What is the role of your agency/business with respect to assisting with service demands in health care facilities (e.g., Hospitals, Long-term care facilities, Homes for the aged, Homes for special care) and has this plan been communicated to these facilities?		
Who will make decisions about reducing levels of service and/or cancelling services temporarily?		
Is there a pre-approval process in place for purchasing additional supplies? If not, how long does it take for approval to be granted?		
How will reduction/temporary cancellation of regular services be communicated to local stakeholders, the public and business partners?		

Roles and Responsibilities for a Pandemic Influenza Business Continuity Plan	Check whether the action is addressed in the Plan	Document who is responsible for each action/decision making process
<p>Does your plan identify the need to consult with the Medical Officer of Health prior to any major communication strategy about reducing service delivery due to staff absences relating to influenza?</p>		
<p>Could any of the agency's/business's services be provided from another work location?</p>		
<p>Have sites providing vulnerable services (such as nursing homes, homes for the aged, homes for special care) been identified and has the inventory of such services been shared with appropriate service providers?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Patient transportation • Patient assessment services • Food services • Equipment supply services (i.e. oxygen equipment) 		
<p>Has your agency developed a list of skills and professional competencies of staff that are transferable to other business units, agency functions or for support to health care institutions in the community?</p>		
<p>Have support services been planned for workers, such as transportation, day-care, meals and grief counselling?</p>		
<p>Do you have a plan to replenish depleted supplies?</p>		
<p>Human Resources</p>		
<p>Has your agency prepared an inventory of skills in the event that people from your agency/business are required to perform duties/functions in other business units/agencies to maintain essential services?</p>		

Roles and Responsibilities for a Pandemic Influenza Business Continuity Plan	Check whether the action is addressed in the Plan	Document who is responsible for each action/decision making process
Have liability issues been addressed for volunteers and re-assigned staff members?		
Do you have a current list of staff complete with telephone numbers? Has someone been assigned responsibility to ensure that it remains current?		
Do you have a current list of recently retired staff (complete with telephone numbers) who may be contacted in the event of extreme staff shortages?		
Do relevant employees have access to a list of all employees and relevant stakeholders?		
Is there a copy of the Health and Safety manual on site in your agency/business?		
Who will be in charge of communicating to the employees in your agency? Do you have a backup person(s) to take on this responsibility?		
Who will represent your agency/business on community emergency response team(s), if requested to participate, and are there back-ups to those persons?		
Who will be responsible for payment issues related to overtime and/or additional salary issues? Are there staff designated as backup for these positions?		
In the event of a staff shortage, what roles/responsibilities could external contract workers and volunteers fill? What roles/responsibilities could co-workers fill?		

Roles and Responsibilities for a Pandemic Influenza Business Continuity Plan	Check whether the action is addressed in the Plan	Document who is responsible for each action/decision making process
Who has the authority to hire contract/temporary workers and to take on volunteers? Is there a backup person for this job?		
Does your agency/business have a system staff use to report absence due to illness and other reasons? Is this information accessible on a daily basis?		
Records and Record Keeping		
Has your agency/business developed appropriate records keeping procedures for items such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff absences • Vacation • Complaints and issues 		
Do you have a plan to record significant decisions that were made during a pandemic flu/emergency?		
Is regular reporting to Boards/government required?		
Communication		
In your organization, who has primary responsibility for communicating with the public/business partners/staff?		
Who is that person's back up in the event that this person is sick with the flu?		
Are there people in your organization who have sole access to incoming information, e.g., business information, incidence reports, complaints etc., if so, have you arranged for designates to receive this information?		

Roles and Responsibilities for a Pandemic Influenza Business Continuity Plan	Check whether the action is addressed in the Plan	Document who is responsible for each action/decision making process
Does your organization maintain a central inventory of passwords to office equipment and electronic files? Is there a designate for the person who has responsibility for the inventory?		
If your information technology person is ill, to whom can you turn if you experience computer problems?		
How does your staff communicate with each other during office hours and after-office hours? Is there an alternate form of communication they can rely on, e.g., cell phones, pagers etc?		
Who are your security contacts should there be a problem with physical access to your work location and is there a back up to your security contacts?		
If mail service is interrupted, are there critical items you need to receive or deliver that you will need alternative arrangements for?		
Does your organization send out time-sensitive letters or documents and is there a back-up system for these?		
How are courier packages generally received and sent out?		
How will you send out public service announcements and news releases? Do you have a process for consulting with the Health Department prior to any releases?		
Will employees and the public be able to access a website or telephone number to get updates on service delivery news?		

Roles and Responsibilities for a Pandemic Influenza Business Continuity Plan	Check whether the action is addressed in the Plan	Document who is responsible for each action/decision making process
Recovery		
What are the immediate lessons learned?		
Who will have the authority to notify the various employees, clients, and stakeholders regarding reinstating services and finally return to full service?		
Who will be responsible for evaluating your local response?		
What factors should be examined as part of the evaluation?		
Have any counselling needs for staff been provided for?		

Resources:

Public Health Agency for Canada, Pandemic Influenza Plan

<http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/cpip-pclcpi/index.html>

Ontario Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care, Influenza Pandemic Plan

http://www.health.gov.on.ca/english/providers/program/emu/pan_flu/ohpip_mn.html

World Health Organization, Pandemic Preparedness

<http://www.who.int/csr/disease/influenza/pandemic/en/>

Halton Region Health Department, Pandemic Influenza Response Plan

<http://www.region.halton.on.ca/health>

Halton Region Health Department, Business Continuity Tool Kit

<http://www.region.halton.on.ca/health>

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