

Beaufort County Community College Pandemic Influenza Plan

Introduction:

The World Health Organization (WHO) and the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) warn that the current risk from avian influenza becoming the next human influenza pandemic is high. The focus of this Beaufort County Community College (BCCC) Pandemic Influenza Plan is to provide a coordinated and comprehensive response to an influenza pandemic in order to help ensure continuation of education and services. An outbreak of avian flu could significantly interrupt normal college functions for a period of six to eight weeks and may require closure of the college. The college community is taking steps to prepare for the potential of such a pandemic in the interest of minimizing the risk of exposure among employees, students, and visitors. This plan is by no means complete nor is it intended to be. There are many issues both common and unique that may have to be taken into consideration when a pandemic occurs.

Mission of the Plan:

The primary mission of the Pandemic Influenza Plan is to identify the hazards that will be produced by an outbreak, plan for and reduce the impact of the outbreak, maintain operations during and after an outbreak, and advise employees, students, and visitors on the things they can do to mitigate the impact of an outbreak on the college and themselves.

Assumptions:

The impact of an influenza pandemic is unknown, however, should a pandemic occur traditional operating assumptions will be inadequate. The following influenza pandemic assumptions were utilized in the development of BCCC's Plan:

- Up to 30% of the workforce could be out sick during a pandemic. People may decide to stay home to care for family members or because they are afraid of exposure.
- Flexibility will be necessary and might include expansion of physical space between work stations or allowing employees to work from home.
- Leave policies will need to be flexible.
- Employees may need personal protective equipment (PPE) to maintain critical services.
- Availability of supplies will be limited due to hoarding, limited production, and transportation limitations.
- Assistance from outside organizations or levels of government will be unlikely if the outbreak is nationwide.
- The College may be closed because of staffing shortages or because of a community quarantine.

Pandemic Response Planning Committee:

The Pandemic Response Planning Committee (Planning Committee) will be the primary group responsible for the “command and control” function in the event of a pandemic. The committee is responsible for implementing and coordinating the Pandemic Influenza Plan. The committee will work with state and local public health and other authorities to make decisions, identify trigger points and thresholds to institute containment measures such as closing and re-opening the college. The committee will serve as the primary contact during the recovery phase, which will deal with the consequences of the pandemic.

The Pandemic Response Planning Committee will be composed of the following members:*

- Dean of Administrative Services, Co-Chair
- Dean of Instruction, Co-Chair
- Dean of Continuing Education
- Dean of Student Services
- Director of Human Resources
- Director of Public Relations
- Director of Nursing
- Director of Plant and Maintenance Operations
- Director of Campus Police
- Network Administrator
- Student Government Association President/ Student Representative

* In the event that the chairpersons is absent/unavailable, then the available committee members will select an acting chairperson(s).

Plan Components:

The Beaufort County Community College Pandemic Influenza Plan will encompass the following areas:

1. Continuity of Essential Functions
2. Human Resources Considerations
3. Security Measures
4. Crisis Communications

1. Continuity of Essential Functions:

Staff illnesses, directives of local government which may include travel restrictions or full/partial quarantines, disruption of power, and other pandemic related problems may prevent the College from operating at full capacity in the event of an influenza pandemic. Accordingly, the Pandemic Response Planning Committee identified the following core functions that, in the committee’s view, must be sustained to allow BCCC to recover effectively from the pandemic and resume normal operations. The Human Resources

Office will work with departments to identify and maintain lists of essential personnel that are required to ensure that core functions are continued in the event of a pandemic.

- A. Delivery of Instruction
- B. Delivery of Student Services
- C. Information Systems
- D. Payroll

- A. Delivery of Instruction: Procedures to be implemented to continue the delivery of instruction during a pandemic include creating distance education components for classes including electronic lectures, utilizing electronic means for giving and receiving assignments/tests, reorganizing classroom time with labs, condensing semesters or developing alternative academic calendars, and revising attendance policies.
- B. Delivery of Student Services: Procedures to be implemented to continue the delivery of student services during a pandemic include managing attendance issues, managing medical withdrawals, and dealing with financial aid issues.
- C. Information Systems: Procedures to be implemented to continue the use and maintenance of information systems include remote access for essential employees, backup of records, and remote maintenance.
- D. Payroll: Procedures to be implemented to continue the college's payroll during a pandemic include remote access for Payroll Specialist and Director of Human Resources, ability to email timesheets for entering into payroll system, encouraging all employees to be on direct deposit, and entering into agreements with other community colleges to have payroll services provided.

2. *Human Resources Considerations:*

The College's ability to maintain essential functions will depend on the health, training, and commitment of its employees. The College will implement procedures to protect the health of our employees including educating employees about an influenza pandemic, encouraging employees to practice good hygiene, requiring employees to stay home when they are ill, establishing "social distancing" protocols, establishing standards for cleaning facilities, encouraging employees to obtain flu shots, revising vacation/sick leave policies during the pandemic, limiting travel to essential functions, limiting the meetings employees must attend, implementing "flex time" scheduling, implementing telecommuting policies, and developing return to work guidelines.

3. Security Measures:

An increase in robberies and civil unrest could occur during an influenza pandemic. In order to mitigate those risks for the college the Pandemic Response Planning Committee will assess security risks at the College and recommend any enhanced security measures such as hiring additional security or upgrading electronic security equipment. The Pandemic Response Planning Committee will develop protocols for securing the campus if it is closed and will develop plans for the security of data, records, and equipment that are transported to other sites or to the homes of employees working remotely.

4. Crisis Communications:

Internal and external communications are essential components of the Pandemic Influenza Plan. The Pandemic Response Planning Committee will designate a chain of command for issuing communications relating to a pandemic and will designate an overall Communications Coordinator. The Communications Coordinator will develop and secure prior approval of letters, press releases, and other communications for all audiences that will be released when the plan is activated. The Communications Coordinator will disseminate copies of the Pandemic Influenza Plan to all employees and will create mechanisms for responding quickly and accurately to questions about the College's plan or policies. The Human Resources Office will maintain calling trees to keep employees informed during a pandemic crisis.

Plan Activation:

The President is authorized to declare that an influenza pandemic crisis has occurred and to order the implementation of those portions of this plan as may be necessary. Upon plan activation the primary goal is to protect the health and safety of employees, students, and visitors. If the Pandemic Response Planning Committee determines that normal operations can be maintained or altered operations can be implemented, maximum efforts should be made to eliminate or minimize any potential for infection or other damage. The Pandemic Response Planning Committee in conjunction with the Beaufort County Public Health Department makes this determination.

The Beaufort County Community College Pandemic Influenza Plan will be activated in several escalating levels:

- Level One: First cases of human-to-human transmission internationally- College stays open with business conducted as usual. The Pandemic Response Planning Committee will monitor the situation and begin planning for level two scenarios. Communication with the campus community will increase to keep everyone informed of plans being implemented.

- Level Two: First verified case in North America- Social distancing measures will be adopted. The Pandemic Response Planning Committee will take steps to plan for the possibility of quarantines and increase communication with employees and students.
- Level Three: Confirmed cases locally- All administrative and academic support units will be shut down and the campus will be closed. Essential personnel will telecommute to complete essential tasks. The Pandemic Response Planning Committee will communicate through email and telephone.
- Level Four: Recovery- Once the pandemic is under control the Pandemic Response Planning Committee will determine when to reopen the campus and will address issues and concerns as they arise.

Recovery Phase:

Once the threat of the pandemic is over the Pandemic Response Planning Committee will begin the process of assisting the College in recovery efforts. The recovery phase will determine which activities/services need to be carried out in a priority sequence and which areas are responsible for completing those tasks and will. During the recovery phase the Pandemic Response Planning Committee will develop a timeline for the completion of activities/services and will keep employees and students informed on key issues and will communicate the date and time that the college will reopen for normal business operations.

Key activities/services to be considered include:

- Power and other utilities
- Facilities recovery
- Communications systems
- Information Technology systems
- Human Resources services
- Services for students

Updates:

Continued plan surveillance and updating will be required to ensure that the Beaufort County Community College Pandemic Influenza Plan effectively addresses the unique needs of the College. The Pandemic Response Planning Committee will review and revise the plan annually.

1/28/08