



College and University Planning for Pandemic Influenza: A Survey of Philadelphia Schools

Lori Uscher-Pines, MSc
Esther Chernak, MD
Steve Alles, MD
Jonathan Links, PhD



The Threat of Pandemic Flu

- Pandemic Defined:
New Strain, None
Immune
- Not If, But When...
- H5N1: Avian Strain
of Concern
- Planning in Various
Sectors



Impact on Colleges and Universities

- Impacted as Institutions
 - W shaped mortality-curve
 - Consequences for research
- Role in Wider Community
 - Sites of transmission



School Closure

- **Social Distancing**
- **Use in 1918**
- **Data on Elementary/Secondary Schools**
- **No Literature on College Planning or Closure Impact**



Objectives and Methods

- Objective:

- To assess the current state of college and university planning for pandemic influenza and to inform guidance for these institutions

- Methods:

- In-depth interviews with pandemic planners at 13 colleges and universities in Philadelphia (11/2006-12/2006)
- Interview guide based on published influenza plans and CDC guidance checklist



General Characteristics of Surveyed Schools

<i>Characteristic</i>	<i>Number of Schools</i> (N=13)
Type of Institution	
Public	1
Private	12
On-Campus Student Housing (yes)	12
School Affiliated with a Medical Schools	4
Student Health Office (yes)	13
Undergraduate Students (median #, range)	2335 (493- 24,194)
International Students (median %, range)	1 (<1- 9)
Students Housed in Dormitories (median %, range)	27 (0- 67)
Student Health Staff (median #, range)	3 (1- 48)
Annual Visits to Student Health (median #, range)	7500 (500- 52000)



Status of Planning at Surveyed Schools

<i>Survey Response</i>	<i>Number of Schools (%)</i>
Engaged in all-hazards emergency planning	11 (85)
Engaged in some type of pandemic planning activities	9 (69)
Reported having a written pandemic plan	6 (46)
Reported having developed trigger policies (e.g. when to close)	7 (54)
Reported a government-related trigger	5 (38)
Reported a pandemic stage trigger	2 (15)
Reported having adequate facilities for isolation and quarantine	10 (77)
Engaged in developing isolation and quarantine policies	4 (31)
Engaged in developing travel/study abroad policies	2 (15)
Coordinated planning efforts with local government	2 (15)
Coordinated planning with neighboring schools	0 (0)
Participated in a tabletop exercise/drill	1 (8)
Reported stockpiling supplies for a pandemic	2 (15)



Barriers to Planning

- **Lack of Information Resources**
 - **Few Concrete Recommendations**
- **Lack of Financial Resources**
- **Lack of Political Will**



Selected Best Practices

- Buddy System
- Planning for Different Scenarios

CDC Severity Index

		Category 1	Categories 2-3	Categories 4-5
W H O P H A S E	4A: Limited Spread in US	Remain Open	Remain Open	Shut Down for up to 12 weeks
	4A-4B: Limited Spread in Region or Metro area	Remain Open	Consider Closure of up to 4 weeks	Shut Down for up to 12 weeks
	5: Localized Spread	Remain Open	Close for up to 4 Weeks	Shut Down for up to 12 weeks



Limitations



- External Validity
- Snapshot of Planning Efforts
- Participant Biases



Recommendations

- For Schools
 - Plan for variation in pandemic impact
 - Integrate all-hazards best-practices

- For Public Health Agencies
 - Provide concrete examples of planning; peer review system
 - Expand checklist model
 - Coordinate planning across institutions
 - More guidance on triggers and stockpiling
 - Address expectations of schools
 - Differentiate between large and small institutions



Areas For Further Research

- Standard pandemic planning skill set
- Barriers to planning

