

Continuity IQ

from  DSPN

July 2006

Fast Facts for Our Valued Friends and Clients

Dear Paul,

Here are some bullets and brain teasers about current events from your friends at DSPN. This month's topic is planning for pandemics. If you'd like to forward this message to your colleagues, just click the "Forward Email" link at the bottom of this page.

Fast Facts about Pandemics

Did you know....

1. Since the H5N1 virus resurfaced in 2003 after initially emerging in Hong Kong in 1997, there have been 228 human cases, 130 of them lethal, according to the latest figures from the World Health Organization (WHO). Forty-one of the deaths occurred in 2005, but in the first six months of 2006, we have already recorded 54.
2. According to a survey conducted in March 2006 by human resources consultant Watson Wyatt, just 15% of large U.S. companies have any bird-flu plan.
3. According to Business Week Online, the U.S. supply of cheap, disposable, polypropylene masks is extremely low. Such "respirators" could play an essential role in containing any flu outbreak. Since 2002, mask makers have been targeted by workers seeking redress for lung ailments caused by exposure to asbestos and silica. More than 300,000 lawsuits in state courts across the country claim that masks worn by industrial workers didn't protect them from inhaling tiny, potentially deadly airborne particles.
4. According to the Fort Wayne News-Sentinel, Public health officials in Fort Wayne recently held a pandemic exercise to test their ability to set up a mass treatment center. The list of lessons learned included the need for more fax machines, copy machines, and medications, particularly for treating anxiety and psychiatric illnesses.
5. According to Tim Hammonds, CEO of the Food Marketing Institute, grocery stores will be on the front line if a pandemic occurs. Many are making plans to stock their stores at night, thereby minimizing employee contact with customers.
6. According to Patrick McConnell, a specialist in quantifying and mitigating operational risk, companies that depend on call centers could be hit hard during a pandemic because many call centers are staffed with parents who will need be home with their children.
7. According to Richard Branson, owner of Virgin Atlantic, pandemic flu could ground 50-70% of passenger planes. According to USA Today, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention will soon have quarantine rooms set up at

- 25 airports staffed by 100 employees.
8. According to Mark Lies, a Chicago-based attorney specializing in occupational health and safety, businesses might be responsible, under the Occupational Safety and Health Act or Workers Compensation to allow employees to return to work after a 12 week absence or to pay for a lengthy hospital stay if the employee gets the illness at work. Also, landowners or business owners may have to notify guests that employees have come down with the virus to avoid being sued. Lies encourages businesses to review and update their human resources policies to deal with a pandemic threat.
 9. The first migratory birds from Asia are showing up in Alaska, where the federal government is spending millions to detect H5N1. Alaska is key to America's surveillance effort, because it is a hub for dozens of migrating Asian and North American bird species.
 10. According to Forbes.com, a shift in the WHO alert level from Phase 3 (current level) to Phase 4 would cause an overnight collapse of the Asian markets similar to the currency crisis of 1997. That crisis started in July 1997 in Thailand, but it caused a global financial domino effect.

Brain Teasers

True or False:

1. The symptoms and treatment of pandemic influenza are the same as any other flu virus.
2. In an office environment, hand sanitation is a more important flu preventative than wearing a disposable respirator mask.
3. A hand sanitizer that contains 62% ethyl alcohol will kill most influenza microbes.
4. There will be little or no vaccine available in the early stages of a pandemic.
5. If a pandemic occurred, the federal government would swoop in and manage the problem.

Check your answers here...

Answers to the above questions:

1. True. An important difference with pandemic flu is that everyone -- not just the frail or elderly -- are acutely susceptible. No one has immunity to this new virus and a vaccine won't be immediately available.
2. True. An influenza virus is more frequently transmitted from hands to face than passing through the air from one person to another.
3. True. If ethyl alcohol is the antimicrobial ingredient in a hand sanitizer, a solution of less than 60% may neutralize bacteria, but it is not considered sufficient to kill a virus.
4. True. It currently takes four to six months to create a batch of vaccines, and America doesn't have the capacity to churn out enough doses to inoculate the entire population in the event of a pandemic. Scientists are working on ways to produce vaccines more quickly -- by shifting production from an egg-based system to cell cultures -- but such advances are years from reality.
5. False. A pandemic would occur simultaneously in many communities across the country, coming in waves that last weeks to months. The federal government would not have the resources or manpower to oversee a response in every community. State, county and local governments would be

responsible for leading the efforts in their areas.

Readiness Check

Hard-to-remember details:

Does your pandemic plan include emergency policies for sanitary procedures, absenteeism, and flexible work hours?

1. Have you determined what travel restrictions you will impose during various stages of a pandemic?
2. Have you determined what pandemic criteria will trigger activation of your EOC?
3. Has your executive team recently reviewed your succession plan for key managers?
4. Do you have a system to account for teleworking employees if an entire facility must be closed?

New From DSPN

Check these out on our website:

1. [DSPN's business continuity workshops](#) will be offered in Philadelphia, Dallas, Bellevue, and Los Angeles during 2006.
2. DSPN's Free Resources Page has several [new sources for avian flu information](#).

Contributors to This Issue

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Comments and Contributions



Tell us what you think...

Thanks to all of you who have sent us comments about this mailing.

In responding to recent incidents, did you discover an interesting detail that you would like to share? If so, send it along and we'll consider it for a future issue. If you want us to print a comment or submission about your company, be sure to give us permission when you write.

Paul

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