

Continuity IQ

from  DSPN

March 2006

Fast Facts for Our Valued Friends and Clients

Here are some bullets and brain teasers about current events from your friends at DSPN. This month's topic is 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. Experts agree that another influenza pandemic is likely. What is not known is when this will happen, nor which flu virus will be responsible. According to Michael O. Leavitt, Secretary of Health and Human Services, "The reality is that if the H5N1 virus does not trigger pandemic flu, there will be another virus that will." For that reason, preparatory measures are both appropriate and prudent.
2. Patterns observed during prior pandemics suggest that outbreaks will occur in waves which might persist over a period of six to eight weeks. Even after a particular wave appears to subside, follow-up waves can develop if safeguards are relaxed. As a result, current business continuity plans that focus only on the impact of short-term events may prove inadequate for the longer-term impact of an outbreak.
3. A primary business impact from a pandemic is increased absenteeism over an extended period. Some absenteeism estimates are as high as 40%, considering not only employee illness, but also family demands or fear of contagion. Personnel absences may become so widespread that existing succession plans may prove inadequate to support critical operations.
4. One common structure for a pandemic strategy uses a phased approach. Each phase provides escalating responses as developments warrant. Phases are sometimes aligned with phases established by governmental officials.
5. In certain jurisdictions, officials may have the authority to quarantine facilities where outbreaks have occurred. Businesses should monitor any quarantine strategies under development by local responders and align their plans accordingly.
6. Because employee fear is a significant aspect of pandemic scenarios, plans should include HR strategies to keep employees informed and to boost morale.
7. A pandemic is likely to simultaneously affect multiple regions of the country. As a result, your backup facilities may be just as affected by the outbreak as the primary locations they are intended to back up.
8. One aspect of a pandemic strategy is to consider your organization's authority

to direct potentially contagious employees to remove themselves from facilities and from contact with other employees.

9. Some company plans feature self-quarantine strategies. For example, during the SARS outbreak in Hong Kong, many firms required personnel who had visited designated areas to remain out of the office for at least ten days after they returned. Before imposing such restrictions, you must take into account several difficult legal issues (e.g., Can such “self quarantines” be required of employees who travel to areas with severe outbreaks for personal or family reasons?).
10. Testing is important to the development of a strategy for pandemics. However, comprehensive testing of response plans for an outbreak that could last for an extended period of time is unrealistic. A more efficient approach may be to test discrete portions of response plans, such as the ability to handle high volume levels of telecommuting or teleconferencing.

Brain Teasers

True or False:

1. The Globe Theatre in London was closed for extended periods due to outbreaks of Bubonic Plague during the time of Shakespeare.
2. Ducks can spread the H5N1 virus without showing any symptoms of illness.
3. The Hong Kong flu of 1968-1969 is the same influenza that is spreading worldwide today.
4. Travel advisories have been issued for U.S citizens traveling to countries where H5N1 has spread.
5. Anyone who might be exposed to the H5N1 virus, such as a poultry worker, should be vaccinated for seasonal influenza.

Check your answers here...

Answers to the above questions:

1. True. All theatres in Shakespeare’s London were closed for extended periods during 1593, 1603, and 1608.
2. True. Ducks are an exception. Most birds that spread the disease become ill themselves. Ducks may not.
3. False. The virus has mutated since then.
4. False. No travel advisories have been issued. Travellers do not appear to be at risk if they avoid poultry farms and live food markets.
5. True. While the seasonal vaccine will not protect a person from H5N1, co-infections can and do occur.

Readiness Check

Hard-to-remember details:

1. Do your plans address high levels of absenteeism that could persist for long periods of time?
2. Are your telecommuting capabilities adequate to support critical functions if key employees are unable to travel?
3. If police and other security services are compromised during an outbreak

scenario, will you need to provide in-house or contractor security services for your facilities?

4. Have you pre-scripted emails that can be sent to employees providing basic information about influenza and boosting morale?
5. Has your legal staff reviewed your plans for a pandemic scenario to identify potential liability issues?

New From DSPN

Check these out on our website:

1. [DSPN's Free Resources Page](#) has 3 new web pages for information about avian flu.
2. [DSPN's workshop focusing on benchmarking](#) will be offered in Atlanta on April 12 and in New York City on April 26.
3. [DSPN's workshop on testing and exercising](#) is receiving rave reviews around the country. It is scheduled for Atlanta on April 13 and for New York City on April 27.

Contributors to This Issue

- Paul Klier, DSPN

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

Contact Information

email: pklier@dspnetwork.com
phone: 800-601-3776
web: <http://www.dspnetwork.com>

Join our mailing list!