

E-16. PANDEMIC FLU PLAN

According to the World Health Organization, Avian Influenza refers to “a large group of different influenza viruses that primarily affect birds. On rare occasions, these bird viruses can infect other species, including pigs and humans. The vast majority of avian influenza viruses do not infect humans. An influenza pandemic happens when a new virus subtype emerges that has not previously circulated in humans.

“For this reason, Avian (Flu) H5N1 is a strain with pandemic potential, since it might ultimately adapt into a strain that is contagious among humans. Once this adaptation occurs, it will no longer be a bird virus—it will be a human influenza virus. Influenza pandemics are caused by new influenza viruses that have adapted to humans.” (The World Health Organization)

The current threat has been generated by incidences of the H5N1 virus strain seen throughout Asia and Europe. One of the biggest concerns about this strain is its ability to infect a wide range of hosts, including birds and humans. Data indicate that most people will have no immunity to this pandemic virus. As a consequence, international health authorities are pointing to the strong possibility that infection and illness rates will likely be much higher than during seasonal epidemics of normal influenza.

A pandemic outbreak has the potential to spread very quickly, especially if transmission of the virus can be spread by human-to-human contact. Such an outbreak could significantly disrupt normal college functions for a period of two to four weeks or up to several months. An outbreak of this magnitude may require closure or significant disruption of normal college operations.

Campus Response to Pandemic

Should a pandemic outbreak occur, LCC will activate its Emergency Management Team (EMT) and issue appropriate announcements to the campus community using multiple modes of communication, including but not limited to, the Emergency Broadcast System, email, voice mail, and the campus website.

The emergency response plan to a pandemic outbreak will have the primary objectives:

- Limit illness and death arising from exposure and infection
- Provide information on treatment and care for those who become ill
- Minimize disruption to essential services
- Maintain continuity as much as possible

Governmental and non-governmental agencies will issue directives and guidance on the full range of response activities that are to be implemented should a pandemic outbreak occur. In Hawaii, the State Department of Health (DOH) is the State agency charged with leading the medical and public health response to a pandemic disaster. The DOH

has developed a State Pandemic Influenza Preparedness and Response Plan which provides guidance for coordinating medical and public health activities that would need to be executed in response to a potential pandemic.

Information and Resources

For more information and resources on the Avian Flu virus and possible pandemic, please refer to these governmental resources on the internet:

- State of Hawaii Department of Health, Pandemic Influenza Preparedness and Response Plan
 - o <http://www.hawaii.gov/health/family-child-health/contagious-disease/pandemic-flu/fluplan.pdf>
- Centers for Disease Control – Avian Influenza Page
 - o <http://www.cdc.gov/flu/avian/>
- National Pandemic Flu Information Page
 - o <http://www.pandemicflu.gov/>