

# Pandemic Response Planning Checklist for Colleges & Universities

In the event of an influenza pandemic, colleges and universities will play an important role in protecting the health and safety of students, faculty, staff and their families. Vancouver Coastal Health has compiled this checklist to assist colleges & universities in developing pandemic response plans. The checklist is divided into four sections:

- Planning & Co-ordination
- Business Continuity & Continuity of Student Learning
- Infection Control Policies & Procedures
- Communications Planning

For further information, refer to the Vancouver Coastal Health Authority Regional Pandemic Response Plan, available at [www.vch.ca/pandemic](http://www.vch.ca/pandemic)

Specific chapters of the plan which may be of interest are:

**Chapter 4: Infection Control:** [http://www.vch.ca/pandemic/docs/ch04\\_infection\\_control.pdf](http://www.vch.ca/pandemic/docs/ch04_infection_control.pdf)

**Chapter 5: Self Care:** [http://www.vch.ca/pandemic/docs/ch05\\_self\\_care.pdf](http://www.vch.ca/pandemic/docs/ch05_self_care.pdf)

The VCH self-care guide, "Look after yourself" is available at:  
[http://www.vch.ca/pandemic/docs/Look\\_after\\_yourself.pdf](http://www.vch.ca/pandemic/docs/Look_after_yourself.pdf)

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## Planning & Co-ordination

- Identify a pandemic response co-ordinator and response team with defined roles and responsibilities for preparedness, response and recovery planning. Include staff from health & mental health services, occupational health, student housing, security, communications, physical plant, food services, faculty, administration and student representation.
- Define accountability, responsibility and resources for planners. Ensure that the plan includes timelines, deliverables and performance measures.
- Plan for variability in levels of illness among students and employees. Plan for different types of community containment interventions. Plan for variability in the severity of illness and rates of infection in the community.
- Work with Regional Health Authority and local authorities to identify legal authority, decision makers and triggers to institute community containment measures.
- Identify and review the institution's legal responsibilities and authorities for executing infection control measures, including case identification, reporting information about ill students or employees, movement restriction and provision of health care on campus.
- Ensure that pandemic response planning is consistent with existing college or university emergency planning and is co-ordinated with the pandemic response planning of the regional health authority.
- Establish an emergency communications plan and revise as necessary. Identify key contacts with the regional health authority, the chain of communications and alternate mechanisms.
- Exercise and update the pandemic plan at least annually.
- Develop a recovery plan to deal with the consequences of an influenza pandemic; e.g., loss of students, loss of staff, financial and operational disruption.

## Business Continuity and Continuity of Student Learning

- ❑ Develop a business continuity plan for the university or college to support maintenance of essential services. Include payroll, systems maintenance, communications, security, plant maintenance, housekeeping, food services and student housing.
- ❑ Develop and disseminate alternative procedures to ensure continuity of instruction in the event of class disruption. Consider web-based, distance instruction, telephone trees, correspondence courses, radio and television-based instruction.
- ❑ Develop contingency plans to maintain research laboratories, especially those involving live animals.

## Infection Control Policies & Procedures

- ❑ Institute infection control policies and procedures that help limit the spread of influenza. Promote hand hygiene and cough/sneeze etiquette. See: [http://www.vch.ca/pandemic/docs/ch04\\_infection\\_control.pdf](http://www.vch.ca/pandemic/docs/ch04_infection_control.pdf)
- ❑ Encourage and support the annual influenza vaccination of students, faculty and staff.
- ❑ Plan to procure, store and provide infection control supplies, such as soap, alcohol-based hand cleaners, paper towels and tissues and receptacles for their disposal.
- ❑ Establish liberal, non-punitive policies for employee and student sick leave specific to pandemic influenza. Include policies about when it is safe to return to work or school after being ill with influenza. Refer to national and provincial guidelines.
- ❑ Establish procedures for students or employees who become sick while at school. Employees or students with known or suspected influenza should not remain at school and should return only after their symptoms have resolved and they are no longer contagious. See: [http://www.vch.ca/pandemic/docs/ch04\\_infection\\_control.pdf](http://www.vch.ca/pandemic/docs/ch04_infection_control.pdf)
- ❑ Establish a pandemic plan for campus-based health care facilities that addresses infection control in the health care setting during an influenza pandemic.
- ❑ Ensure health facilities identify critical supplies needed to support a surge in demand and take steps to provide those supplies.

## Communications Planning

- ❑ Develop a plan for communicating with students, employees and families. Identify lead spokespersons. Ensure appropriateness of language and reading level.
- ❑ Develop and test platforms such as hotlines, telephone trees, dedicated websites, local radio or television, for communicating college/university response and actions to employees, students and families. Build redundancy into communications.
- ❑ Advise employees and students where to find reliable and current pandemic information from provincial and local public health sources. Refer to: [www.vch.ca/pandemic](http://www.vch.ca/pandemic)
- ❑ Make publicly available information about the university's or college's pandemic response preparation and plan. Include information about potential closures and contingency plans for students who depend on student housing and campus food service. Include information on how student safety will be maintained for those remaining in student housing.

- ❑ Distribute information from public health sources about routine infection control practices. Include hand hygiene, cough/sneeze etiquette, pandemic influenza fundamentals, personal and family protection and at-home care of ill students, employees or family members. Refer to VCH's self-care guide, "Look after yourself", available at: [http://www.vch.ca/pandemic/docs/Look\\_after\\_yourself.pdf](http://www.vch.ca/pandemic/docs/Look_after_yourself.pdf).
- ❑ Anticipate and plan communications to address the potential fear and anxiety of employees, students and families that may result from rumour and misinformation.