Risk Management: Pandemic Disease Outbreaks

A pandemic disease outbreak is a global outbreak that occurs when a new disease (such as a new influenza virus) emerges that people have little or no immunity to and for which there may be no vaccine.

Planning and Coordination

* Assign one person to identify reliable sources of information and watch for public health warnings about the disease, school closing and other actions taken to prevent the spread of the disease.
  + <https://www.cdc.gov/>
  + <https://www.missoulacounty.us/government/health/health-department>
  + <https://www.mcpsmt.org/>
  + <https://www.who.int/>
  + Ready.gov/pandemic
* Encourage parents to have back up care or a plan for finding care for their children, including talking to family and friends about back up care, if the program is closed during a disease pandemic.
  + <https://www.childcareresources.org/>
  + Consider determining which families have back up care and resources and keeping their children home first in the event of a staff shortage
* Identify ways that a pandemic might affect your program and develop a plan of action (for example, you might have problems with food service, transportation of staffing).
* Locate other sources of meals for low-income children who receive subsidized meals in your program. Provide resources for staff and families that can help deal with stress or other problems caused by a disease pandemic.
  + <https://www.empowerplace.org/>
  + <http://www.missoulafoodbank.org/get-help/summertime-nutrition-for-kids-kids-table/>
  + <http://www.missoulafoodbank.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/07/Community-Resource-Guide-updated-feb-2018.pdf>
* Assess the needs of medically fragile students or students with special needs and incorporate into the plan.
* Determine what under what circumstances your program will close and re-open, how you will notify families and staff of the closure and of re-opening. Determine any procedures you will follow while closed.
  + Ensure your contract and program policies are clear and not in conflict with this your pandemic disease plan.
* Include a plan to review this document and update it in a timely manner.
  + Consider providing at-home learning activities or suggestions for families to make social distancing easier.
* Keep a good supply of things you will need to help control the spread of infection. (For example, keep on hand plenty of soap, paper towels and tissues). Ensure there is a plan to order supplies if the staff member responsible is absent.

Infection Control Polices and Actions

* Provide resources for preventing the spread of germs. Have a plan to post and distribute resources for families and staff.
  + <https://www.cdc.gov/flu/pdf/freeresources/updated/everyday-preventive-actions-8.5x11.pdf>
* Consider how the pandemic disease spreads, and what symptoms are present in various populations. Address the program illness exclusion policy accordingly. (For example children with COVID 19 may experience mild symptoms while adults will experience fever, shortness of breath and a cough. Consider amending the program illness exclusion policy to include children of symptomatic parents). Ensure your contract allows such an amendment.
* Encourage children, staff any anyone else entering your program to use proper handwashing procedure in all situations that require handwashing.
  + “Caring for Our Children” Standards 3.2.2.1 and 3.2.2.2 <https://nrckids.org/CFOC>
* Continue daily health status checks up entry into the facility. Keep accurate records of when children or staff are absent and include the kind of illness.
  + Exclude *staff* and *children* who are ill. Pay close attention to the symptoms of the pandemic disease. When possible, give staff paid sick leave so they can stay home without losing wages. This is especially important during a pandemic to encourage social isolation.
* Learn and share symptoms of the pandemic disease and share with parents and staff. Have a process or plan for how to share this information. Request that they notify you of symptoms and not come to the program if they are exhibiting symptoms.
* Frequently clean and disinfect common surfaces with bleach water solution ¼ cup of bleach per 1 gallon of water.
  + Target surfaces such as door knobs, faucet handles, toilet surfaces, floors, countertops, and toys.
  + Do Not use this high concentration on food contact surfaces.
* Wash all bedding in hot water with a hot air dry.

Communication Planning

* Have a plan for keeping in touch with staff members and families
* Make sure staff and family member have seen and understand your pandemic disease plan.
* Report any communicable disease as required by licensing.
  + <https://dphhs.mt.gov/publichealth/cdepi/reporting#151171388-what-is-reportable>