

Pandemic Flu Protocol (Summary Version of Full Pandemic Flu Plan)

I. Introduction

Bridgewater State University has developed a plan to address the possibility of a world-wide pandemic or avian flu that is more lethal than ordinary seasonal flu. (See full version of Pandemic Flu Plan in Appendix, attached hereto.) While many specifics of the plan pertain directly to avian flu, the basic planning elements are applicable to any widespread pandemic or serious epidemic affecting the university.

II. Pandemic Protocol (Summary of Plan)

Pandemic Flu Planning/Crisis Team

No plan can anticipate every contingency. Perhaps the most important element is to specify a team of key leaders who will convene not only for planning, but to manage an actual pandemic emergency for the university. In 2012, the Pandemic Flu Planning Team (which originally authored this document) was merged with the generic Crisis Team. The Crisis Team is chaired by the executive vice president of the university.

Overall Goals for the Pandemic Flu Plan

1. To eliminate or reduce the possibility of death and serious illness among members of the university community.
2. To continue the most critical university functions whenever possible.
3. To minimize disruption of instruction and other university functions as much as possible within the first two priorities.

Assumptions Guiding the Plan

The plan assumes that a pandemic could result in closing the university for at least one period of as much as 10-12 weeks. Careful management will be needed to ensure continuity of operations and leadership during such period(s) of closure.

Existing Informational and Material Resources

Flu information is now available on the Health Services website. Supplies have been acquired and stockpiled for use in a flu pandemic.

Criteria for Closing the University in a Flu Pandemic

If influenza becomes pandemic and appears lethal, the university will be closed when the first confirmed human case appears anywhere in North America. The goal will be to move all community members off campus as quickly as possible; but the university must be prepared to house and feed anyone who cannot leave. The Pandemic Flu Plan designates particular residence halls for this purpose and identifies how residents would be fed after such a closing.

Emergency Operations Center for a Pandemic

When the Crisis Team decides that the university should be closed, an Emergency Operations Center will be established in Tillinghast Hall. From this location the Crisis Team and the university administration will issue decisions and information to the university community, and also establish contacts with the news media. Press conferences will be called as needed. The Crisis Team and the cabinet will meet either at this Emergency Operations Center or nearby on campus to make decisions and initiate action to deal with the public health crisis.

Critical University Functions and Staffing in a Pandemic

The Pandemic plan identifies critical functions to be staffed, including the Police Department, Health Services, IT, Payroll, Power Plant, Sodexo, and university executive leadership. There will be provisions to house and provision staff who must work on campus, should they wish or need to reside on campus. The university will provide supplies and guidance to working employees in an effort to protect them from infection. The plan specifies different minimum staffing levels depending on the number of community members remaining on campus after a closing.

Continuity of Leadership in a Pandemic

The president and cabinet will continue to lead the university if able during a pandemic, supported by the Crisis Team. The president has designated the executive vice president (EVP) to lead university efforts during a pandemic crisis, and the EVP and president will confer whenever possible about decisions to be made. The executive committee of the Board of Trustees will identify appointed leaders should the president and/or other leaders become incapacitated, so that the university will always have active leadership.

Communications in a Pandemic

Led by the vice president for marketing and communications, the university will communicate its decisions and actions regularly to both internal and external constituents.

Operation of Necessary Housing and Dining in a Pandemic

If a pandemic requires closure of the university, there may be students and staff needing housing on campus. The Pandemic plan presents suitable criteria for choosing the specific location(s) to be used after a closure decision is made.

Collaboration with Local, State, and National Agencies

The university will work closely with FEMA, MEMA, and town of Bridgewater officials in a pandemic.

Effect of a Pandemic on International Activities of the University

International and exchange students will be urged to find alternative living arrangements in case the university closes due to a pandemic; however, those who have no alternatives will be housed on campus. For those Bridgewater students and faculty already abroad, the university will work with study abroad providers, the CDC, and the State Department to support them as necessary and to coordinate communications.

Bringing a Pandemic Crisis to a Close

The decision to reopen the university after closure due to a flu pandemic will trigger the next round of planning, to prepare for another wave of illness. The Crisis Team will make recommendations to the cabinet on health precautions needed as the campus reopens.

REVISED 11/13

PANDEMIC FLU PROTOCOL CHECKLIST

INFLUENZA HAS BECOME PANDEMIC.

FIRST HUMAN CASE HAS BEEN CONFIRMED IN NORTH AMERICA.

UNIVERSITY HAS BEEN CLOSED AND EVACUATED.

INDIVIDUALS WHO COULD NOT LEAVE HAVE BEEN HOUSED ON CAMPUS.

APPROPRIATE MEANS HAVE BEEN IDENTIFIED TO FEED AND CARE FOR REMAINING INDIVIDUALS.

EMERGENCY OPERATIONS CENTER HAS BEEN ESTABLISHED.

APPROPRIATE COMMUNITY NOTIFICATIONS HAVE BEEN MADE.

PANDEMIC FLU CHECKLIST