

Columbus Technical College Pandemic Influenza Plan October 2009

Purpose

The purpose of the Columbus Technical College (CTC) Pandemic Influenza Plan is to provide a coordinated and comprehensive response to an influenza pandemic in order to help ensure continuation of education and services.

Coordinating Committee Members

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Subcommittees

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This document puts in place a set of operational guidelines for CTC to manage during an influenza pandemic. The plan addresses how CTC will strive to maintain essential services of the college. Essential services are those functions that keep a college operating. The coordinating Committee serves as the primary group that is responsible for the “command and control” function in the event of a pandemic. The Coordinating Committee is responsible to ensure that the following items are decided or addressed during the course of a Pandemic Influenza:

- a. cancellation of classes, and/or other public events

- b. closure of campus
- d. continuation of essential services and functions

The Coordinating Committee will work with state and local public health and other local authorities to identify legal authority, decision makers, trigger points, and thresholds to institute community containment measures such as closing (and re-opening) the college. The coordinating Committee will also work with the local health department to discuss an operational plan for surge capacity for healthcare and other mental health and social services to meet the needs of the college and community during and after a pandemic. The Overall Coordinating Committee will serve as the primary contact during the recovery phase which will deal with the consequences of the pandemic.

The planning document is by no means complete nor is it intended to be. There are a multitude of issues both common and unique that may have to be taken into consideration when a pandemic occurs.

Influenza Transmission Information from the Center for Disease Control (CDC):

Seasonal human influenza viruses are thought to spread from person to person primarily through large-particle respiratory droplet transmission (e.g., when an infected person coughs or sneezes near a susceptible person). Transmission via large-particle droplets requires close contact between source and recipient persons because droplets do not remain suspended in the air and generally travel only a short distance (< 6 feet). Contact with contaminated surfaces is another possible source of transmission and transmission via droplet nuclei (also called "airborne" transmission). Because data on the transmission of novel H1N1 viruses are limited, the potential for ocular, conjunctival, or gastrointestinal infection is unknown. Since this is a novel influenza A virus in humans, transmission from infected persons to close contacts might be common. All respiratory secretions and bodily fluids (diarrheal stool) of novel influenza A (H1N1) cases should be considered potentially infectious.

Assumptions

The impact of a future influenza pandemic is unknown; however it is clear that if a pandemic occurs, traditional operational continuity assumptions will be inadequate. The following pandemic influenza assumptions were utilized in the development of the CTC Plan:

1. A pandemic could last 6-8 weeks and include several waves over the course of a year.
2. Up to 30% of the workforce could be out sick during a pandemic with absenteeism occurring in rolling waves which rise and fall over the course of several weeks. Absenteeism could reach 50% during the peak of a pandemic. People may decide to stay home to care for family members or to stay home with children when schools are closed. Fear of exposure may lead to lower rates of attendance before an actual outbreak begins.
3. Employer flexibility will be necessary and might include; staggered shifts, expansion of physical space between work stations or allowing employees to work from home.

4. Leave and attendance policies may need to be flexible.
5. Employees may need personal protective equipment (PPE) to maintain critical services.
6. Availability of supplies will be limited because of hoarding, combined with limited production and transportation limits.
7. Assistance from outside organizations, county, state and federal government will not be likely if the outbreak is nationwide.
8. Ensure that essential functions have been identified and staff has been cross trained to maintain essential functions. If cross training isn't an option due to licensure, ensure that memorandum's of understanding are in place with individuals/jurisdictions with the same certification.
9. Encourage sick employees to stay home.

College facilities use and the role of maintenance personnel will depend largely on the number of campus activities that will remain in place in the various scenarios. The Vice President of Operations will be on the Coordinating Committee and will work with committee members to determine facility and maintenance needs based on the decisions to interrupt campus activities.

Planning Scenarios

The CTC Pandemic Plan addresses five scenarios of action in the Plan.

Scenario 1 - The stated flu has reached the US and documented cases are increasing.

Scenario 2 (LEVEL I-Yellow) - An outbreak of the stated flu has occurred on campus, possibly caused by multiple direct contacts with an infected individuals. There is a "rolling wave" of absenteeism of up to 30% reduction in the work force and a 30% of the student body is sick. The absenteeism rates climb and fall over the course of several weeks.

Scenario 3 (LEVEL II – Orange) – It is determined that the outbreak has reached 40% of employees and students. Precautionary measures to help minimize the spread of the specified flu continue to be emphasized.

Scenario 4 (LEVEL III – Red) – It is determined that the outbreak has reached 50% of employees and students. Students are sent home and college is closed as precautionary measure for up to 1 week with approval from TCSG office.

NOTE: Scenarios depicting the CTC campus as a quarantine/isolation site for students and/or members of the community have been omitted since all students commute and the facilities will not accommodate needs of quarantined or isolated individuals.

Pre-Planning:

It will be necessary to engage employees in planning contingencies for a pandemic.

1. At the fall staff meeting, faculty will develop a plan to continue delivery of instruction in the event of an interruption. Alternative methods of delivery may include Distance Learning, Angel, email and/or telephone communications.
2. Student Affairs, Academic Affairs and financial aid will be asked to identify what services can be continued in the event the buildings are closed. A college-wide meeting will be scheduled to identify which tasks can be continued and the necessary personnel to complete the tasks.
3. Tasks that can be completed by tele-commuting will be identified.
4. Essential functions that must be maintained in the event of a Pandemic will be identified.
5. Staff will be cross-trained to perform essential functions.

6. Planning will consider the need for stockpiling of essential supplies. Key suppliers will be contacted for a plan of regular shipments in case of shortages. These supplies will include rubber gloves tissues and paper towels, virucidal cleaning supplies, disinfectant wipes for small surfaces, and hand sanitizer.
7. Possibility of a pandemic and plan to follow in the case of such a pandemic will be communicated to employees and students per posted information, web sites and called meetings/educational sessions.
8. Seasonal and specific influenza vaccination will be encouraged for employees and students in coordination with Public Health Department. Coordination with the local health department will be made for possible administration of vaccine(s) on the college campus.
9. Guidelines for preventing the spread of influenza at the college (e.g., promoting respiratory hygiene/cough etiquette, and prompt exclusion of people with influenza symptoms) will be communicated to employees and students.
10. Guidelines for employees who have been exposed to pandemic influenza, are suspected to be ill, or become ill at the worksite will be published.
11. Visual alerts will be posted at all entry points to the facility, advising staff and visitors not to enter if they have symptoms of influenza.
12. Web site information, a telephone “tree” and a RingClear message will be developed and utilized in the event of a pandemic.
13. The heating, ventilation, and air condition (HVAC) systems will be assessed.

Scenarios

Scenario 1 - The specified flu is prevalent and documented cases are increasing with reported deaths. Review essential services and determine how this scenario will impact on campus activities and what if any countermeasures would you do to minimize the impact. (The goal is to stay open)

Coordinate an education and awareness campaign across the college for employees and students regarding personal health and safety.

Ensure departments stockpile essential supplies.

Ensure information is disseminated to employees regarding expectations of use of sick leave, vacation and personal leave.

Work with state and local public health and other local authorities to identify legal authority, decision makers, trigger points, and thresholds to institute community containment measures such as closing (and re-opening) the college.

Work with the local health department to discuss an operational plan for surge capacity for healthcare and other mental health and social services to meet the needs of the college and community.

Implement the continuity of operations schedule to provide overall coordination of the college functions and services.

Work with communications personnel to provide information to employees.

Cross train personnel when possible.

Draft internal and external bulletins and announcements addressing the potential fear and anxiety of employees, students and families that may result from rumors or misinformation.

Conduct an educational campaign, self-protection information, hand washing, and promote seasonal flu vaccination.

The college web site will contain educational information and links to other sites pertaining to influenza information.

Relationships and communication with public health specialists will be established.

Provide sufficient and accessible infection control supplies (e.g., hand-hygiene products, tissues and receptacles for their disposal) in all agency locations.

Educate employees and visitors about the symptoms of influenza and not to enter the workplace if they are symptomatic.

Post visual alerts at all entry points to the facility, advising staff and visitors not to enter if they have symptoms of influenza.

Insure there are adequate supplies of tissues, hand hygiene products (e.g., soap and water, paper towels, alcohol-based hand rubs), cleaning supplies, and surgical masks (for people who become ill at work) for employees.

Work with state and local public health for inoculations to be offered on campus.

Begin preparing communications for Scenario 2.

Scenario 2 (LEVEL I – Yellow) *An outbreak of influenza has occurred on campus. There is a “rolling wave” of absenteeism of up to 30% reduction in the work force and student body. The absenteeism rates climb and fall over the course of several weeks. Review essential services and determine how this scenario will impact on campus activities and what if any countermeasures would you do to minimize the impact. (The goal is to stay open)*

College will remain open.

Campus population will be notified of Level I Status.

Technical College System of Georgia Commissioner will be notified of status.

Ensure departments have sufficient essential supplies.

Students are directed to use services of the various departments by phone, e-mail or fax, whenever possible.

Employees are directed to use services of the various departments by phone, e-mail or fax, whenever possible.

Ensure information is disseminated to employees regarding expectations of use of sick leave, vacation and personal leave and who to notify in the event of absence.

Work with state and local public health and other local authorities to identify legal authority, decision makers, trigger points, and thresholds to institute community containment measures such as closing (and re-opening) the college.

Work with the local health department to discuss an operational plan for surge capacity for healthcare and other mental health and social services to meet the needs of the college and community.

Implement the continuity of operations schedule to provide overall coordination of the college functions and services.

Identify staff members who will work from home if emergency response level is activated.

Review IT staffing schedules and remote connections.

LogMeIn access evaluated and increased as needed.

To maximize social distancing, determine cancellation of public events.

Based on staff attendance, determine suspension of priority functions and services and reassignment of employees, if necessary.

Based on faculty/staff attendance, determine suspension of various instructional courses/programs.

Visual alerts are posted at all entry points to the facility, advising employees and visitors not to enter if they have symptoms of influenza.

Workplace visitors are strictly limited to those essential for the operation of services.

Implement travel restrictions, if appropriate.

Cancel recruiting and marketing trips. (Plan developed to continue recruiting/admissions during reduced social contact period.)

Cancel non-essential travel for meetings and conferences.

College employees will be notified of leave options.

Activate internal bulletins and updates for the College's website.

Request employees and their families to report all influenza cases.

Continue to stockpile essential departmental supplies.

Employees will be advised to not report to work if they become ill.

Advise ill employees not to return to work until they are healthy and no longer infectious using Center for Disease Control definition of the infectious period for pandemic influenza:

Infected persons are assumed to be shedding virus from one day prior to illness onset until resolution of symptoms. In general, persons with novel influenza A (H1N1) virus infection should be considered potentially infectious from one day before to 7 days following illness onset. Children, especially younger children, might be infectious for up to 10 days.

Encourage employees who have recovered from pandemic influenza and are unlikely to be re-infected (they will have natural immunity) to return to work as soon as they are healthy and no longer infectious.

Begin preparing communications for Scenario 3.

***Scenario 3 (LEVEL II – Orange)** The influenza virus outbreak on campus has increased with 40% of employees and students absent from personal illness or from care-giving responsibilities to ill family members. Review essential services and determine how this scenario would impact on campus activities and what if any countermeasures should be taken to minimize the impact. (The goal is to stay open)*

College will remain open.

Campus population will be notified of Level II Status.

Technical College System of Georgia Commissioner will be notified of status.

Notify and cooperate with local and state public health efforts.

Continue education campaign targeted at preventing transmission.

Ensure departments have sufficient essential supplies.

Students are directed to use services of the various departments by phone, e-mail or fax, whenever possible.

Employees are directed to use services of the various departments by phone, e-mail or fax, whenever possible.

Ensure information is disseminated to employees regarding expectations of use of sick leave, vacation and personal leave and who to notify in the event of absence.

Determine cancellation of all public events scheduled on campus.

Workplace visitors are strictly limited to those essential for the operation of services.

Continue to stockpile essential departmental supplies.

Employees will be directed to use services of all departments by phone, e-mail or fax.

Employees will be advised to not report to work if they become ill.

Employees who feel ill, or if someone observes that another person is exhibiting symptoms of influenza at work, they are to contact the Director of Human Resources, by telephone immediately.

Provide SOP with work from home instructions to those approved to work from home.

Limit face-to-face customer service to those activities that are essential.

Strictly limit visitors to those essential for the operation of critical functions.

Advise the ill employees not to return to work until they are healthy and no longer infectious (using Center for Disease Control definition of the infectious period for pandemic influenza).

Encourage employees who have recovered from pandemic influenza and are unlikely to be re-infected (they will have natural immunity) to return to work as soon as they are healthy and no longer infectious.

Begin preparing communications for Scenario 4.

Scenario 4 (LEVEL III – Red) *The influenza virus outbreak on campus has increased with 50% of employees and students absent from personal illness or from care-giving responsibilities to ill family members. Review essential services and determine how this scenario would impact on campus activities and what if any countermeasures would be taken to minimize the impact. Goal is to close the campus for up to 1 week.*

Campus population will be notified of Level III Status.

Technical College System of Georgia Commissioner will be notified of status and approval will be sought to close the campus.

Notify and cooperate with local and state public health efforts.

Coordinate communication with the student population that college courses and activities are cancelled for up to 1 week. Ensure the communication directs students to the mechanism that will keep them informed of the status of closure/re-opening.

Coordinate communication with the employees that college courses and activities are cancelled for up to 1 week. Ensure the communication directs employees to the mechanism that will keep them informed.

Visual alerts are posted at all entry points to the facility, advising individuals that the college has been closed.

Recovery Plan

Adjust course schedule based on length of closure.

Communicate/post plans for students whose programs of study were interrupted.