



**COUNTY OF ROCKBRIDGE
PANDEMIC INFLUENZA
RESPONSE PLAN**

Executive Summary

An influenza pandemic has the potential to cause more death and illness than possibly any other public health threat. A pandemic, or a global epidemic, can occur when a new strain of virus emerges, either through mutation or genetic re-assortment, to which most or all of the world's human population has had no previous exposure and thus has no immunity. The emergence and recent spread of the highly pathogenic avian influenza strain H5N1 in bird populations throughout many parts of the world is of great concern. The potential for the emergence of a new variant strain of this virus which could be easily transmitted person-to-person triggered the World Health Organization to urgently prompt organizations worldwide to initiate preparedness planning efforts should a pandemic occur.

Although the timing, nature and severity of the next pandemic cannot be predicted, a planned and coordinated response is critical to minimizing the public health impact, as well as the social and economic disruption to our everyday lives. The unique characteristics of a pandemic the capability to affect many locations at once, the extended length of such an event, the possibility of multiple waves will strain local, state and federal resources. It is unlikely that there will be sufficient personnel, equipment, and supplies to respond adequately to multiple areas of the country for a sustained period of time. The impact of a pandemic will be pervasive and unlike any emergency our society has faced in modern times.

Rockbridge County embarked on its pandemic influenza planning efforts in the fall of 2006. This coordinated effort involved county agencies, Rockbridge County Public Schools, the cities of Lexington and Buena Vista, and the towns of Glasgow and Goshen and partner organizations including, Rockbridge County Public Schools, Carilion Stonewall Jackson Hospital, the Rockbridge Chamber of Commerce, and the American Red Cross as well as a variety of private sector groups. The County's planning initiatives were undertaken in concert with the emergency planning efforts of the Virginia Department of Health, United States Department of Health and Human Services, and the World Health Organization.

Rockbridge County used a two-pronged approach in its planning effort. The first approach addressed the specific activities that must be undertaken by the Lexington-Rockbridge County Health Department and the public health community in preparation for and responding to a pandemic. The second addressed the activities that must be undertaken by Rockbridge County agencies to identify and maintain critical government and public services during a pandemic. The Rockbridge County Pandemic Influenza Response Plan is one of a variety of tools the county is using in its planning and response efforts. In addition to the plan, agency Continuity of Operation Plans (COOP's) will address critical issues unique to each agency so they will be optimally prepared

to respond should a pandemic occur. A tri-fold pamphlet has been developed and updated in September 2008 to provide the public with information regarding the plan and how best to plan for their families.

The Rockbridge County Influenza Response Plan encompasses a detailed summary of the county's public health response as well as its plans for the continuation of critical government services during a pandemic. It describes a coordinated local strategy to prepare for, and respond to influenza pandemic and supplements Rockbridge County's Emergency Operations Plan as well as state and federal pandemic influenza response plans. The Rockbridge County Influenza Response Plan is intended to be a synthesized guide for responding agencies, an overview to provide information to the public on the County's preparedness, and a tool to assist the public in their own planning and preparedness.

The Plan includes the six phases of Pandemic Planning:

Sections 1 through 3 provide background information. In these sections, information regarding the differences between influenza and avian influenza is provided. The elements required for a pandemic to occur are reviewed and pandemic influenza is distinguished from seasonal influenza. **The six phases of pandemic influenza as defined by the World Health Organization are summarized.** Planning assumptions, guiding principles and key preparedness strategies are summarized. Finally, official authorities and a summary of applicable public health statutes are summarized.

Section 4 outlines the communication strategies and provides information on key messages, audiences, message development and message dissemination in a pandemic. It is augmented with the detailed communications plan in Attachment 1.

Section 5 provides a broad listing of primary public health, communication, and emergency management actions to be carried out during the six phases of an influenza pandemic described by the World Health Organization. This information is **augmented by a detailed summary of specific activities to be undertaken by the Lexington Rockbridge County Health Department and the public health community** during the evolution of a pandemic. It additionally provides information on Post-Pandemic Recovery and outlines processes for determining the end of the pandemic and for conducting an after-action assessment of the County's response.

Section 6 describes the planning and preparation Rockbridge County is undertaking to minimize disruption to critical governmental functions. Specifically, it outlines critical issues Rockbridge County Government is addressing at countywide and agency levels to protect the workforce during an outbreak and to ensure maintenance of critical government services in the event a pandemic occurs. A checklist that was

developed for and distributed to agencies to guide them in their pandemic influenza planning is included. Regional governmental partnerships, business and not-for-profit, and community relationships are described

Attachments include a communications plan as well as strategies for fatality management.

Resources including a list of published and electronic references, a listing of abbreviations, and a glossary of terms are provided at the end of the document.

It should be noted the available information regarding best practices for preparedness in a pandemic changes frequently as more becomes known. As such, it is critical to recognize this is a dynamic plan document which will be updated as appropriate to reflect current information, guidelines and best practices regarding pandemic influenza preparedness and response.

<u>Pandemic Phase</u>	<u>WHO Definition</u>	<u>Public Health Goals</u>	<u>Agency Actions</u>
Phase I	No new influenza virus subtypes have been detected in humans. An influenza virus subtype that has caused infection may be present in animals. If present in animals, the risk of human infection or disease is considered to be low.	Strengthen influenza pandemic preparedness at the global, regional, national, and subnational levels	<p><u>Emergency Management</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitor and circulate health and intelligence reports and emergency information through official sources. • Work with the office of Public Information and Virginia Department of Emergency Management to provide proactive information as appropriate. <p><u>Central Shenandoah Health District</u></p> <p><u>Emergency Planner:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review current emergency plans for inclusion of provisions for mass vaccination campaigns. Include security aspects in partnership with local law enforcement authorities. • Conduct a county-wide space and site resource inventory. Determine the availability of shelters, firehouses, schools, gymnasiums, nursing homes, day care centers, and other potential sites for aggregate care. Work with hospitals in jurisdiction to identify appropriate sites to serve as triage centers, treatment centers, mass vaccination sites or as holding areas for acutely ill patients not able to be admitted to an acute care hospital. Make arrangements with owners of each facility to use the site, if necessary, to care for ill persons during a pandemic. • Identify facilities/resources with sufficient refrigerated storage to serve as temporary morgues, if necessary. Develop a plan for management of bodies when morgue capacity has been exceeded. • In coordination with the state office, devise a plan for local distribution and administration of public-sector vaccine. • Work with local private and volunteer organizations to develop and synchronize local response to a pandemic of influenza. • Coordinate planning with other public health disaster planning at the local level. <p><u>District Epidemiologist and/or other communicable disease staff:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review policies and procedures to find and remove any barriers to the

			<p>annual influenza or pneumococcal vaccination programs. Work with local health care facilities to assess and improve health care worker immunization levels.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Educate staff about the nature and significance of pandemic influenza and the local response. • Establish a means of rapid, two-way communication between local health department and hospitals (infection control practitioners and emergency department directors). • Contact physicians in the community to see if they would be interested in participating in the Sentinel Physician Surveillance System. • Review emergency department capacity, number of hospital beds, number of intensive care unit beds, quantity of ventilators, morgue capacity, and number of health care providers available to see patients. Use FluAid and FluSurge, software programs developed by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, to project the impact of the pandemic influenza on localities and hospitals within the health district. • Investigate opportunities to work with hospitals, health systems and/or physicians to analyze daily reports of influenza-like illness in patients. Analysis could be conducted as a part of syndromic surveillance activities. Discuss mechanisms for the local health department to obtain data related to the number of emergency department visits, hospitalizations, intensive care unit admissions and hospital deaths due to influenza during a pandemic. <p><u>Dept. of Social Services, Rockbridge Area Community Services Board, & American Red Cross</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Educate clients and the community on basic individual and family preparedness and the importance of having an emergency kit. <p><u>Rockbridge County Public Schools</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Follow the guidelines and advice of the Office of Emergency Management and the guidelines established by the Virginia Department of Education. <p><u>Chamber of Commerce</u></p>
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Phase II	No new influenza virus subtypes have been detected in humans. However, a circulating animal influenza virus subtype poses a substantial risk of human disease.	Minimize the risk of transmission to humans; detect and report such transmission rapidly if it occurs.	<p><u>Emergency Management</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Same as Phase I <p><u>Central Shenandoah Health District</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Same as Phase I <p><u>Dept. of Social Services, Rockbridge Area Community Services Board, & American Red Cross</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Same as Phase I <p><u>Rockbridge County Public Schools</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Same as Phase I <p><u>Chamber of Commerce</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Same as Phase I <p><u>Carilion Stonewall Jackson Hospital</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Same as Phase I
Phase III	Human infection(s) with a new subtype, but no human-to-human spread,	Ensure rapid characterization of the new	<p><u>Emergency Management</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Begin briefings for county senior management team, county administration, Board of Supervisors, emergency responders, etc.

	<p>or at most rare instances of spread to a close contact.</p>	<p>virus subtype and early detection, notification, and response to additional cases.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assist agencies with the development of agency-specific plans to ensure continuation of critical government and public services. • Announce current phase level to staff and provide education to staff. • Maintain up-to-date knowledge on current national and state advisories and recommendations, such as travel advisories. <p><u>Central Shenandoah Health District</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Notify hospitals and local private and public partners of novel virus alert. • Notify local emergency management director of novel virus alert. • Disseminate bulletins received from the CDC or state office regarding clinical, epidemiological, and virologic characteristics of variant strain. • Work with Sentinel Providers and others to collect specimens for submission to DCLS in order to detect the presence of variant strains in Virginia, particularly individuals who present with influenza-like-illness and have a recent travel history to a region where the novel strain of influenza has been identified. • If a novel virus is identified in a resident, conduct an epidemiologic investigation and determine possible exposure source(s), risk factors, and symptoms. Identify contacts, place under surveillance for illness, and work with the laboratory to determine whether testing of contacts is appropriate. <p><u>Dept. of Social Services, Rockbridge Area Community Services Board, & American Red Cross</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In collaboration with the Health Department, develop a coordinated plan to meet basic needs of those in isolation/quarantine. • Work with community groups and vendors to determine available resources and gaps in meeting essential needs. • Continue to educate clients and the community on basic individual and family preparedness and the importance of having an emergency kit. <p><u>Rockbridge County Public Schools</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Follow the guidelines and advice of the office of Emergency Management and the guidelines established by the Virginia Department
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			<p>of Education.</p> <p><u>Chamber of Commerce</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Follow the guidelines and recommendations of the office of Emergency Management. <p><u>Carilion Stonewall Jackson Hospital</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Follow the guidelines of the office of Emergency Management • Detect clusters/influx • Monitor Incidence • Implement control and prevention strategies • Evaluate the real extent of outbreak and main populations at risk • Identify technical and operational difficulties/challenges
<p>Phase IV</p>	<p>Small cluster(s) with limited human-to-human transmission but spread is highly localized, suggesting that the virus is not well adapted to humans.</p>	<p>Contain the new virus within limited foci or delay spread to gain time to implement preparedness measures, including vaccine development.</p>	<p><u>Emergency Management</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promptly inform staff of phase-level changes. • Conduct (or participate in) teleconference/video conferences that include state and local health officials; state and county officials; emergency management and response chiefs, public affairs personnel, etc. • Alert agencies to re-familiarize themselves with the County’s Emergency Operations Plan and to review agency-specific plans to ensure they are up-to-date. • Identify resources necessary to implement the county’s EOP, COOP and County Pandemic Influenza Plans. • Increase staff in the OEM County Watch Center to increase information exchange with external and internal partner agencies. • Activate the Emergency Operations Center (EOC), at the appropriate level, to begin incident management activities. • Identify federal, state and county resources necessary to implement public protective actions. <p><u>Central Shenandoah Health District</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review pandemic influenza response plans.

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In coordination with the state office, update hospitals, emergency medical services (EMS), local law enforcement, and local, private and public partners. • Ensure that high-risk groups and others receive vaccine and anti-viral medications, as appropriate. <p><u>Dept. of Social Services, Rockbridge Area Community Services Board, & American Red Cross</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct an initial assessment on individuals or families in need of basic services identified during the Health Department interview (DSS and/or RACSB). • Connect individuals and families (those identified by initial assessments as well as those pre-identified by DSS and RACSB) with community resources to meet their needs for basic services. • Continue to educate clients and the community on basic individual and family preparedness and the importance of having an emergency kit. <p><u>Rockbridge County Public Schools</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Follow the guidelines and advice of the office of Emergency Management and the guidelines established by the Virginia Department of Education. <p><u>Chamber of Commerce</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Follow the guidelines and recommendations of the office of Emergency Management. <p><u>Carilion Stonewall Jackson Hospital</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Follow the guidelines of the office of Emergency Management • Observe/monitor for changing epidemiology of disease • Identify high-risk populations (pts. And employees). • Evaluate impact of control interventions and revise as needed
Phase V	Larger cluster(s) but human-to human spread still localized, suggesting	Maximize efforts to contain or	<p><u>Emergency Management</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Same as Phase 4

	<p>that the virus is becoming increasingly better adapted to humans, but may not yet be fully transmissible (substantial pandemic risk).</p>	<p>delay spread, to possibly avert a pandemic and to gain time to implement pandemic response measures</p>	<p><u>Central Shenandoah Health District</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review plan for distribution of public sector vaccine. • Provide state officer with lists of public vaccine distribution sites. • Enhance collection of clinical specimens and transport to the state laboratory. • Contact private partners to review their plans for distribution and administration of private-sector vaccine. • Finalize surveillance plans with area hospitals outlining mechanisms to obtain data on: number of emergency department visits, number of hospitalizations, number of intensive care unit admissions and number of hospital deaths related to influenza. <p><u>Dept. of Social Services, Rockbridge Area Community Services Board, & American Red Cross</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct an initial assessment on individuals or families in need of basic services identified during the Health Department interview (DSS and/or RACSB). • Connect individuals and families (those identified by initial assessments as well as those pre-identified by DSS and RACSB) with community resources to meet their needs for basic services. • Continue to educate clients and the community on basic individual and family preparedness and the importance of having an emergency kit. <p><u>Rockbridge County Public Schools</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Follow the guidelines and advice of the office of Emergency Management and the guidelines established by the Virginia Department of Education. <p><u>Chamber of Commerce</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Follow the guidelines and recommendations of the office of Emergency Management. <p><u>Carilion Stonewall Jackson Hospital</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Follow the guidelines of the office of Emergency Management • Same as Phase 4
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<p>Phase VI</p>	<p>Pandemic: increased and sustained transmission in the general population.</p>	<p>Minimize the impact of the pandemic</p>	<p><u>Emergency Management</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue daily conference calls and briefings with groups identified earlier. • Continue to coordinate with the office of Public Information and Virginia Department of Emergency Management (VDEM) to provide proactive information to our employees, residents, partners, businesses, etc. • Maintain the Emergency Operations Center (EOC), at the appropriate level, to coordinate incident management activities. • Implement all elements of the county Emergency Operations Plan, Pandemic Influenza Plan, COOP, and others; as appropriate. • Close or reduce non-critical county services and re-deploy available county resources as appropriate. • Activate and assign volunteers as necessary to implement public protective actions. • Increase security at identified facilities/locations; including but not limited to police and fire stations, government centers, emergency communication center, Emergency Operations Center, critical infrastructure, identified businesses, etc. • Implement and support public health/safety directives from CDC, state/local health directors, president, governor, county officials, etc. • Initiate recovery planning activities. <p><u>Central Shenandoah Health District</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Coordinate use of available local resources during pandemic, including private, public, and volunteer resources. • Report pandemic-related information, including influenza data obtained from hospitals, regularly to the VDH Division of Surveillance and Investigation (DSI). • Assess effectiveness of local response and available local capacity. • Administer vaccine once it becomes available. Work with hospitals to monitor emergency departments for influenza activity, including a review of emergency department visits, hospital admissions, and hospital deaths.
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<p>Second Wave:</p>	<p>During this phase, a recurrence of epidemic activity within several</p>	<p>Minimize the impact of the pandemic</p>	<p><u>Emergency Management</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue all activities listed under Pandemic phase • Review, evaluate, and modify as needed, local pandemic response

	<p>months following the initial wave of infection occurs.</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitor resources and staffing needs. <p><u>Central Shenandoah Health District</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue all activities listed under Pandemic phase • Review, evaluate, and modify as needed, the local pandemic response. • Report pandemic-related information regularly to DSI. • Continue to vaccinate. • Monitor resources and staffing needs. <p><u>Dept. of Social Services, Rockbridge Area Community Services Board, & American Red Cross</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue all activities listed under Pandemic phase • Review, evaluate, and modify as needed, local pandemic response • Monitor resources and staffing needs. <p><u>Rockbridge County Public Schools</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Follow the guidelines and advice of the office of Emergency Management and the guidelines established by the Virginia Department of Education. <p><u>Chamber of Commerce</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Follow the guidelines and recommendations of the office of Emergency Management. <p><u>Carilion Stonewall Jackson Hospital</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Follow the guidelines of the office of Emergency Management • Continue all activities listed under Pandemic phase • Review, evaluate, and modify as needed, local pandemic response • Monitor resources and staffing needs.
<p>Pandemic Over</p>	<p>This phase marks the cessation of successive pandemic ‘waves’</p>		<p><u>Emergency Management</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assess local capacity to resume essential services and functions. • Assess local capacity to resume normal emergency health care delivery.

	<p>accompanied by the return of a more typical wintertime epidemic (in the United States).</p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assess fiscal impact of pandemic response. • Report results of assessment to local government authorities. • Report results of assessment to state office • Modify the local Pandemic Influenza Response Plan based on lessons learned <p><u>Central Shenandoah Health District</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assess local capacity to resume normal public health functions. • Assess local capacity to resume normal health care delivery. • Assess fiscal impact of pandemic response. • Report results of assessment to local government authorities. • Report results of assessment to state office • Modify the local Pandemic Influenza Response Plan based on lessons learned. <p><u>Dept. of Social Services, Rockbridge Area Community Services Board, & American Red Cross</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assess local capacity to resume normal essential services and functions. • Assess local capacity to resume normal health care delivery. • Assess fiscal impact of pandemic response. • Report results of assessment to local government authorities. • Report results of assessment to state office • Modify the local Pandemic Influenza Response Plan based on lessons learned. <p><u>Rockbridge County Public Schools</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Follow the guidelines and advice of the office of Emergency Management and the guidelines established by the Virginia Department of Education. <p><u>Chamber of Commerce</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Follow the guidelines and recommendations of the office of Emergency
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			<p>Management.</p> <p><u>Carilion Stonewall Jackson Hospital</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Follow the guidelines of the office of Emergency Management• Assess local capacity to resume normal essential services and functions.• Assess local capacity to resume normal health care delivery.• Assess fiscal impact of pandemic response.• Report results of assessment to local government authorities.• Report results of assessment to state office• Modify the local Pandemic Influenza Response Plan based on lessons learned.
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