

AE Pandemic Flu Plan Business In The Balance

ERCOT Pandemic Planning Symposium
October 31, 2006



Bird Flu Hits Austin



Federal Planning Assumptions

Number of Episodes of Illness, Healthcare Utilization, and Death
Associated with Moderate and Severe Pandemic Influenza Scenarios*

Characteristic	Moderate (Similar to 1958/68)	Severe (Similar to 1918)
Illness	90 million (30%)	90 million (30%)
Outpatient medical care	45 million (50%)	45 million (50%)
Hospitalization	865,000	9,900,000
ICU care	128,750	1,485,000
Mechanical ventilation	64,875	745,500
Deaths	209,000	1,903,000

*Source - Health & Human Services
Pandemic Influenza Plan, 2005

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Austin Metro Planning Assumptions

Est. Population – 1,306,627

Characteristic	First Wave	Second Wave (Approx 6 months later)
Illness	326,657 (25%)	65,332 (5%)
Outpatient medical care		
Hospitalization	13,067 (4%)	2,614 (4%)
ICU care		
Mechanical ventilation		
Deaths	5,553 (1.7%)	1,111 (1.7%)

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Planning Assumptions

- Peak absenteeism estimates range from 40% to 70% due to illness or family care
- Schools and daycares likely to be closed
- Total business shutdown is possible
- 1 in 10 workers or family members may be hospitalized

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AE Pandemic Preparation

Protecting People

Sustaining Critical
Operations



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AE Pandemic Preparation

- Plan is a work in progress
- Plan focuses on the following areas
 1. Surveillance and Networking
 2. Communication/Education
 3. Protective Measures
 4. Policy Issues
 5. Workforce Resiliency – Business Continuity



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1 - Surveillance and Networking

- Represent Austin Energy in City-wide planning effort
- Close tie established with Austin/Travis County Health & Human Services Dept
 - Represent Austin Energy in discussions of vaccination and anti-viral distribution
- Attend symposiums & monitor the internet and other resources for disease progress & best practices

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1 - Surveillance and Networking

Post outbreak – Phase 5-6

- Coordinate with local Health authorities on monitoring flu outbreaks within AE
- Coordinate on vaccine and anti-viral prioritization and administration

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2 - Communication

- Employee messages (posters, newsletters, safety meetings)
 - Characteristics and transmission of flu virus
 - Proper hygiene practices
 - High risk settings and actions
 - Reasonable precautions families can take to minimize exposure
 - Protective measures planned by AE
 - HR policies which will be implemented if pandemic occurs

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2 - Communication

- Critical employee communication
 - Attend staff meetings now to discuss pandemic issues
 - Meet with mission critical staff to discuss issues

<http://www.ndu.edu/ctnsp/home.html>

Bird Flu and You: A Quick Guide to Protecting Yourself and Your Family From Bird Flu

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3 – Employee Protection

■ Hygiene and distancing

- Hand sanitizer and disinfecting wipes for surfaces installed in meeting rooms, kitchens, break rooms, etc. – *In place now*
- Supplies stockpiled – sanitizing gel, sanitizing wipes, gloves, N-95 masks
- Planning & preparing for social distancing
 - Minimize or eliminate group gatherings
 - Use of technology to alleviate human contact
 - Work at home
 - 3' rule

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3 – Employee Protection

- Considering quarantine of Mission Critical employees, including lodging and feeding
 - Logistics of this is difficult
- Coordinating with Austin/Travis County to include mission critical employees on vaccination/anti-viral priority lists
- In phase 5-6, enforce sick leave for anyone showing symptoms



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3 – Employee Protection

■ Areas of particular concern ~

- Call Center
- Energy Control Center
- Call Center
- Power Plant Operations Center



- Call Center

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4 – Policy Issues

HR policy issues defined by the City have significant impact on AE's efforts to prepare

City has a vision of using "non-essential" employees to backfill support roles for critical functions

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4 – Policy Issues

Compensation Questions:

- How are mission critical staff rewarded for continuing to work
 - Employees are being required to face exposure
 - Employees could potentially be working for several weeks while others remain home
 - Employees may be quarantined
- How are employees performing “work-at-home” compensated during pandemic?
 - Employees working and employees on standby
 - Exempt and non-exempt in each category

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4 – Policy Issues

- Consider facilitating “stay at WORK” measures and safeguards.
 - How is this compensated?
 - How are employees lodged and fed
- Consider what, if any, provisions will be made for family members of critical employees.
- Clarify workers compensation policy for work at home and in anticipation of any claim of workplace infection from flu

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4 – Policy Issues



- Emphasize policy on worksite Personal Protective Equipment (masks, gloves) use, including enforcement

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4 – Policy Issues

Employee Leave Issues

- Absent due to travel restrictions (stranded out of area), isolation or quarantine, school closures, public transportation closures, etc.
- Depleted leave time
- Clarify policies related to employee health – If symptomatic, STAY HOME

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4 – Policy Issues

Employee Leave Issues

- Establish process to track and monitor health status of employees per Health Department guidelines
- Work with the union to facilitate smooth implementation of policies ATOP (andemic)

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Business Continuity

Critical Employees

- Support business processes defined as Priority One during AE-wide business continuity planning effort ~



- Keeping the lights on
- Sustaining chilled water services
- Keeping customers informed
- Providing critical support to above

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Business Continuity

- Identify critical employees who must be at the worksite

- Differentiate continuously critical and critical to respond to major outages
- Determine impact of school/daycare closures on these employees
- Determine willingness to receive vaccine/anti-viral

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Business Continuity

- Prepare now to sustain critical functions with 40-70% reduction in staff availability

- Additional cross training?
- Decentralizing staff?
- Document detailed processes
- Assess impacts on critical staffing from school and daycare closure
- Prepare and equip for work-at-home – option for non-critical functions

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Business Continuity

- Review business continuity plans in light of pandemic impacts
 - Assess impact of business shut-down
 - how long can your processes be idle before severe impact on AE business
 - Consider work-at-home option
 - Prepare & equip now

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Pandemic Phase 4, 5

- IMPLEMENT measures recommended by the Health Department related to employee **protection and disease surveillance**
- Ratchet up employee communication
- IMPLEMENT preparations for work-at-home as appropriate

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Pandemic Phase 4, 5

- IMPLEMENT policies related to employee health
- Enforce sick leave for employees exposed to flu or exhibiting symptoms
- Implement process to track and monitor health status of employees per Health Department guidelines

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Pandemic Phase 4, 5

- Reinforce hygiene practices to minimize risk of infection
- Review resources required for implementation of plans. Increase inventory as needed
- Implement screening of employees & visitors to critical facilities to determine if they are a potential risk

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Pandemic Phase 4, 5

- Consider recommendations by CDC and Health Department
- Review work-at-home procedures for readiness in case of further progress of the pandemic

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Pandemic Phase 6

- Participate in City-wide incident command structure
- Follow guidelines by Health Authority on employee protection and business closure
- Communicate Communicate Communicate

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Overriding Issues

- Remember employees are people with very human concerns
 - "Duck and cover"
 - "Charge the hill"
 - Compensate me appropriately
 - Don't tell me, involve me
 - My family is my priority. Period.
 - Austin Energy employees are City employees, but they are utility employees first
 - Route requests for volunteers through the chain of command they are comfortable with

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Questions?

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