

Section 11: Workforce Support

I. Overview

II. Objectives

III. Broome County Health Department Activities

A. Preparing Workforce Support Materials

B. Workforce Resilience Programs

C. Response to Pandemic Period

IV Appendices

Please reference HHS Pandemic Influenza Plan, Section 11-8, boxes 1 – 4 for information concerning the following:

- **Psychosocial issues for response workers**
- **Psychosocial issues for families of response workers**
- **Impact of Pandemic Flu on health care workers**
- **Lessons learned during the 2004-2005**

Section 11: Workforce Support

I. Overview

Workforce support activities can help responders remain effective during an influenza pandemic. The occupational stresses experienced by healthcare providers and other responders may be present for more than a year or may last five to ten weeks, etc. and recur in two or three waves. Medical and public health responders and their families will be at personal risk during the pandemic, and many will require psychosocial support services. Recommendations for workforce support focus on the establishment of psychosocial support services that will assist workers to manage emotional stress during response efforts to an influenza pandemic, and resolve related personal, professional and family issues. **The Broome County Department of Mental Health and Mental Health Association of the Southern Tier** will be responsible for meeting the needs of county responders and their families.

II. Objectives

- Administrators, managers and supervisors within healthcare, the Broome County Health Department and public health organizations will be familiar with, and actively encourage, the use of tools and techniques for supporting staff and their families in times of crisis.
- Broome County Health Department staff members will be trained in behavioral techniques to help employees cope with grief, stress, exhaustion, anger and fear during an emergency.
- Training in psychological support services to staff who are not behavioral health professionals will be offered to strengthen resilience..
- Strategies will be offered to assist staff who have child care or elder care responsibilities or other special needs. Additional resources will be identified that might be available to employees and their families.
- Workforce support materials will be distributed by county Mental Health agencies during a pandemic.

III. Broome County Health Department

Activities

A Preparing workforce support materials

Employers of response workers and providers of essential services should obtain or prepare workforce support materials (in hard copy or electronic format) for distribution during a pandemic. These materials should be designed to do the following:

- Educate and inform employees about emotional responses they might experience or observe in their colleagues and families (including children) during an influenza pandemic and about techniques for coping with these emotions

Section 11: Workforce Support

- Educate employees about the importance of developing “family communication plans” so that family members can maintain contact during an emergency
- Describe workforce support services that will be available during an emergency, including confidential behavioral health services and employee assistance programs.
- Answer questions about infection control practices to prevent the spread of pandemic influenza in the workplace and address employment issues related to illness, sick pay, staff rotation, and family concerns.
- Obtain education and training materials on psychosocial issues for distribution to employees during an influenza pandemic. Include materials on:
 - Stressors related to pandemic influenza;
 - Signs of distress;
 - Traumatic grief;
 - Psychosocial aspects related to management of mass fatalities;
 - Stress management and coping strategies;
 - Strategies for building and sustaining personal resilience;
 - Behavioral and psychological support services;
 - Strategies for helping children and families in times of crisis;
 - Strategies for working with highly agitated patients;
 - Developing “family communication plans”;
 - Services available during emergency’
 - Measures that persons can take to protect themselves and their families. (To support these efforts, CDC, HRSA, NIH, and SAMHSA collaborate with the Department of Homeland Security, other federal agencies, and nongovernmental organizations to identify and develop these educational materials about:
- Prepare educational and training materials on psychosocial issues for distribution to employees prior to an influenza pandemic. Include materials on:
 - stressors related to pandemic influenza;
 - signs of distress;
 - traumatic grief;
 - psychosocial aspects related to management of mass fatalities;
 - stress management and coping strategies;
 - strategies for building and sustaining personal resilience;
 - behavioral and psychological support services;
 - strategies for helping children and families in times of crisis;
 - strategies for working with highly agitated patients;
 - developing “family communication plans”;
 - services available during an emergency;
 - measures that persons can take to protect themselves and their families.

