

H1N1 FLU CHECKLIST for District Administrative Locations

In the event of a disruption due to high absenteeism or a location closure due to H1N1 flu, the administrative locations of the Dallas County Community College District (DCCCD) will play an integral role in supporting the colleges of DCCCD. The district's Risk Management office has developed the following checklist as a framework to assist district administrative support locations in developing plans to prepare for and respond to these potential disruptions at the campuses and/or the administrative locations.

Planning points for district administrative support locations to consider:

- To be effective, Business Continuity, also known as Continuity of Operations planning, has to be developed by the work group using the plan. Risk Management is available as a resource but cannot create an effective business continuity plan for a work group.
- The line of succession, or "chain of command," must be known in advance. During an influenza pandemic, work absences could reach up to 50 percent for more than two weeks at a time. Past pandemics have had two month durations per wave with up to three waves over one year. A decision tree needs to be developed at the district level and the location level. Decision trees are also needed for each division, department and/or work group with a clear succession line down to the last employee.
- Each division, department and/or work group needs to cross-train its employees to ensure backups to the work process. Review alternative personnel resources.
- High absenteeism is the most likely scenario to face district administrative locations. An employee will be out sick or out taking care of a sick family member. If an employee is out taking care of a family member they might be able to perform some work from home. Department heads should review each position to determine if any portion of the work can be done from the employee's home. In reviewing each position the supervisor should ask: "How does the employee working from home meet the needs of the district?" Additional questions to ask:
 - What are the functions of the work group?
 - What tasks are required to be done daily, weekly, monthly?
 - What key people need to be set up with a VPN (allows district IT access) for work from home?
- Review all aspects of alternative means for delivering services to the campuses and other district work groups. **Ensure that the alternative means can be technically supported (example: VPN) by communicating with the departments that would provide that technical support (example: IT and Communications).** In the past, 72 percent of pandemic plans included the popular strategy of allowing some employees to work from home. Can the district infrastructure support your work group's plan to work from an alternate location? Will the public internet infrastructure that your employee uses hold up to the increased load?

- **On answering department phones**, simple forwarding of the main department extension to a home and/or personal phone will not always work. If the phone is not answered the call will not go to the district's voice-mail system. Also, how heavy is the personal use of the employee's personal phone? How often will a caller receive a busy signal?
- If the location is not required to close, working from home or an alternate location is not the only way to prevent the spread of H1N1. The spread of H1N1 can also be prevented by practicing social distancing in the workplace. When practicing social distancing the employees would be asked to stay in their personal workspace as much as possible and use the phone or email for communication.
- Some have expressed concern about possible abuse of sick leave during this flu season. One way to reduce the possibility of abuse and show all employees that the district is concerned about their well-being is to contact employees when they are out sick this flu season. Contact should not be more than once per day.
- During this flu season it is recommended that supervisors document why the employee is out on sick leave. Example: employee is out with flu-like symptoms, employee is out taking care of sick son, employee is out taking care of sick spouse, etc. This will help track trends in the illness.
- An FAQ (concerning H1N1) developed by Legal, district HR and Risk Management titled "Q and A Influenza."