

Bissell Centre Pandemic Planning Summary Document November 2009

Introduction

Over the last year the agency has been discussing and developing a policy/protocol for pandemic planning. A number of Directors have worked to help ensure programs, participants, staff and facility operations are best prepared and can help during a pandemic outbreak. The Inner City Executive Directors have also met to discuss agency coordination and communications. This document is intended to assist the Leadership Team and the Management Team of Bissell Centre in knowing when and what to implement during a pandemic outbreak. This document is to be used in conjunction with the Bissell Centre Program Pandemic Planning Charts and the Staff Work Preparedness Plan Questionnaire.

Agency Pandemic Level One (following UN or Federal Government identifying a potential Pandemic problem and following Health Service Recommendations appropriate to Bissell Centre)

- Programs and business operations continue as normal
- Order and install hand sanitization stations in all agency facilities
- Provide staff with written information and individual hand sanitizers
- Order masks
- Ensure signs about hand washing and disease symptoms are posted
- Provide verbal and written information to program participants
- Connect with management lawyer to determine staff policy implications
- Develop specific Program Pandemic Plans
- Develop a Staff Work Preparedness Plan Questionnaire and distribute to staff
- Leadership Team identifies first and second alternate if team member ill

Agency Pandemic Level Two (following the beginning of a pandemic wave as identified by Health Services – decided by the Executive Director in conjunction with the Leadership Team)

- Programs and business operations continue as normal – some services may be affected on different days depending on staff/participant illness
- Work with other agencies to ensure vaccine site located at Bissell Centre and agency coordination
- Develop and Implement screening practices – not admitting when sick, isolating if identified sick when in programs, redirecting to the appropriate supports (Jamieson Centre if homeless, call parents if children sick in the Early Child Development etc) and/or call Emergency Medical Services if required
- Increase communications re: staying home when sick and getting medical attention as per suggestions from Provincial/Federal Health Services. (call health link, call doctor if feel symptoms are severe with fever, call 911 if difficulty in breathing)
- Get list of all staff scheduled for vacation and identify that those not leaving the city may be required to return to work
- Ensure management staff receive Confidential Staff Home List and all staff receive a reminder one pager on how to access phone and email remotely
- Emphasize staff updating their Staff Work Preparedness Questionnaire
- Place an extra hand washing station in the drop-in.
- Increase cleanliness of multi – touched areas (i.e. Door knobs, bathrooms etc)
- Have daily check-in with Directors to identify who is sick from each department and participant illness observations and stats. Discuss if actions are required.

Agency Pandemic Plan Level Three (to be determined by the Executive Director in conjunction with the Leadership Team - based on Health Service Recommendations limiting large gatherings, number of staff absent, number of participant illnesses and safety)

- Programs and business will be affected negatively. Staff are reassigned to different areas to maintain critical services.
- Stop large group extracurricular gatherings – such as; Staff Festive event, participant Christmas parties, special volunteer supports – taxes and haircuts,- volunteer food groups, inservice and workshops, women’s lunch, staff networking meetings
- Potential program closures and reassignment of healthy staff to other work based on staff qualifications
- Masks – as there is still confusing evidence regarding the effectiveness/use of masks, no decision has been made when to require participants or staff to use them. This will continue to be reviewed on a regular basis.
- Volunteers – business as usual unless level three; it is anticipated that the number of volunteers will decrease

Agency Pandemic Plan Level Four (to be determined by the Executive Director or designate – based on Health Service Recommendations, number of staff absent, number of participant illnesses and safety)

- Agency closure
- Leadership Team stays in contact through phone and email.

Human Resource Pandemic Policies

- Requirements for a doctor’s note will not be required unless illness is longer than 10 consecutive working days. (illness in front of Commissioner of Oath)
- Staff who have not received a vaccine and are considered high risk and do not want to work for fear of contracting the disease will be required to provide a Doctor’s note indicating that they are not recommended for work for them to ascertain accrued Health Maintenance. (ie. Pregnant staff)
- Staff illness – staff will use all sick time accumulated and if they are still ill and want continued pay – must use any banked time and vacation time to do so. A memo identifying usage of time outside health maintenance must be written and signed by both the staff member and their supervisor. Staff without any time left may request a special one-time consideration for health maintenance/vacation accrual of up to 2 months.
- Staff Vacation – Staff vacations that have already been approved will be put on notice that they may be called back to work and must provide contact information. Staff not leaving the city and who have not paid plans will be called back first and only if critical to the circumstances. This will require the Director’s request and approval of the Executive Director.
- In case of agency closure – staff would receive temporary layoff notices as reasonably as possible. It is anticipated that a closure due to a pandemic outbreak would be no longer than 30 days. During this time, employees may elect to utilize any banked time and vacation time accrued to reduce financial impact. A closure due to a public health emergency or severe staff shortage may qualify staff for EI benefits and an EI administrator would be contacted prior to the closure and notices in determining claim waiting period rules and how staff would apply in such circumstances.

Pre-Pandemic Program Planning Worksheet

Each program was asked to complete a questionnaire and identifying specific program considerations under a number of areas. Each area identified a number of questions to help them complete the questionnaire and then they were asked to develop action plans based on their responses.

Area Sections include:

Staffing

- What is the minimum number of staff required to run the program?
- How could you reorganize a smaller staff and maintain services?
- Could participants be utilized as staff during an emergency?
- Would changing hours allow for better use of staff?
- Can staff work from home? If so, what is needed to allow that to happen?
- What role could volunteers play?

Participant/Program Users

- What information needs to be communicated to participants about the flu – prevention, symptoms, self-care, where/when to seek medical advice?
- What is the best method to communicate that info?
- What supplies could your program utilize for prevention – i.e. hand washing stations, waterless hand wash, tissues.
- What do you do if you suspect a participant is ill?

Reducing Services

- Could services be scaled back or components of the service cancelled? For how long?

Closing Services

- At what point do we stop offering the program? Consider level of participant attendance, availability of staff.
- What will the impact be on participants? How can those be addressed?

Alternate Sites

- Could you coordinate or share resources with other agencies?
- If Bissell closed what support would need to be available for participants?
- What arrangements could be made with other agencies now to ensure the needs of participants are being met?

Communications

- What are your current modes of communication with stakeholders/participants?
- How will those modes be impacted by a pandemic?
- Who do you regularly communicate with?
- How would reduction in service best be communicated?
- How would closures best be communicated?
- Do you know how to reach staff after hours?

Other

- Any special considerations for your program and/or participants? Impact on Bissell?

Staff Work Preparation Checklist

1. Be vigilant with your calendar & work plans – review often with the view that you could be away from work without notice for 4 – 7 days.

- Are there meetings, deadlines, projects that cannot be missed or delayed?
- If you are not available, who do you need to tell (other than Bissell)? How will you tell them?
- If there are things that cannot be delayed, who can attend to them on your behalf? How will you let them know?
- Do you have contact info at home? Can you access your work email from home? Make a list and/or notes of information that someone would need to be do what cannot wait until you return. Update regularly.
- Find a co-worker that you can update on a regular basis and share your contact info.

2. Think about what you do on a regular basis that must continue if you are away – for e.g. ordering supplies/food, maintenance contacts. Write down the information. Do you have passwords? Keys?

Make a plan for the essential work to continue and share with at least one person.