

BISNO
Pandemic Preparedness Plan



Pandemic Preparedness Plan

This document defines BISNO'S approach to pandemic planning and response. This information will guide the actions, which are implemented as the pandemic evolves.

The entire pandemic plan will be regularly reviewed and updated as new information on the risks and effective responses to pandemic flu comes to hand.

Section 1 Pandemic Planning Structure

- 1.1 Resourcing Pandemic Planning
- 1.2 Pandemic Preparedness Team
- 1.3 Pandemic Response Action Plan
- 1.4 Pandemic Plan Revisions

Section 2 Communications

- 2.1 Keeping Management Informed
- 2.2 Keeping Employees Informed
- 2.3 External Communications

Section 3 Service & Business Continuity

- 3.1 Pandemic Preparedness Plan to Compliment Other Emergency Plans
- 3.2 Influenza Manager

Section 4 Optimizing Employee Health

- 4.1 Optimizing Employee Health
- 4.2 Seasonal Influenza Vaccination

Section 5 Reduction of Infection Risk

- 5.1 Reducing Risk of Employees Becoming Infected Outside BISNO Sites
- 5.2 Reducing Risk of Introduction of Virus into Sites
- 5.3 Reducing Risk of Virus Transmission in Sites

Section 6 Management of Infected/Potentially Infected Employees

- 6.1 Ill Employees Will Not Be Disadvantaged
- 6.2 Treatment of Employees Suffering Pandemic Influenza
- 6.3 Contact Tracing

Section 7 Management of Traveling Employees

- 7.1 Out of Town Travel

Section 8 Antiviral Medications

- 8.1 Antiviral Medications

Section 1 Pandemic Planning Structure

1.1 Resourcing Pandemic Planning

BISNO is committed to reducing the risk to its employees and in maintaining business continuity posed by a pandemic flu.

BISNO has assigned resources to pandemic planning activities to mitigate this risk.

Rationale BISNO recognizes that a pandemic flu could infect a significant portion of its global workforce over an extended period of time. The ensuing prolonged reduction of its workforce may impact the organization's business continuity. BISNO recognizes the possible risk posed by a pandemic flu and will use all appropriate measures to reduce the risk to its employees and the organization.

Ownership Senior Management

1.2 Pandemic Preparedness Team

BISNO has formed a Pandemic Preparedness Team consisting of representatives from various departments. Team members will develop policies and procedures to ensure that BISNO is able to respond to a possible flu pandemic.

The team meets regularly and remains informed of the threat posed by a pandemic flu. The team oversees the development and implementation of pandemic preparedness planning throughout the organization, understanding that this is a dynamic issue and that it is expected that the plan will require modification.

Rationale A pandemic could spread globally and threaten employee health and business continuity. Because of the characteristics of a pandemic flu, the organization as a whole may be impacted including individuals in service.

Pandemic planning is a complex and dynamic issue requiring implementation of plans in response to certain "triggers" such as the World Health Organization (WHO) pandemic phases.

To do this, the Pandemic Preparedness Team will need to attain a significant body of knowledge, and remain up to date, so that a well thought out plan can be developed and maintained.

The Pandemic Preparedness Team will have the capacity to respond rapidly and proactively to new information by mobilizing appropriate resources.

Ownership Pandemic Preparedness Team

1.3 Pandemic Response Action Plan

BISNO has developed and will keep updated a "Pandemic Response Plan" to assist in the planning and response to service delivery.

Rationale The Pandemic Preparedness Team has developed a detailed, but flexible plan that fits within existing crisis management/business continuity/disaster recovery plans.

The response plan may then be specifically tailored to the diverse departments as necessary to allow the same intellectual logic and actions to be used agency-wide.

Ownership Pandemic Preparedness Team

1.4 Pandemic Plan Revisions

The Pandemic Preparedness Team will review this plan on a regular basis. The frequency of review is dependant upon the development of the pandemic, and should reflect the speed and degree of change in the virus and emerging information but at least annually.

Rationale At present, it is not known when a pandemic will occur or the exact nature of the pandemic virus. To remain functional and relevant, the pandemic plans must contain the latest information on the flu virus, including prevention of transmission, treatment, and risk reduction measures.

Ownership Pandemic Preparedness Team

Section 2 Communications

2.1 Keeping Management Informed

BISNO has a plan that will guide pandemic preparedness communications to management.

The plan specifies audiences, communication messages, methods of delivery and frequency of communications.

Rationale Information regarding development of the pandemic comes from many sources, may be rapid, confusing and yet vital. The information needs to be digested and considered in relation to how it will affect BISNO.

Management must be kept apprised of developments and implications of changes to pandemic phase as well as the actions that such changes require them to take.

Ownership Pandemic Preparedness Team

2.2 Keeping Employees Informed

BISNO will provide its employees with timely pandemic preparedness communications.

Rationale Given the media's attention to the risk of a pandemic it is to be expected that employees are developing an awareness of, and probably a certain degree of concern about, the implications of pandemic flu.

BISNO will communicate pandemic planning developments to its employees. Providing employees with information on pandemic planning is reassuring and likely to prevent mistrust and panic.

Communications should be timely and easily accessed.

Ownership Senior Management

2.3 External Communications

The Chief Executive Officer and/or designate will handle all external communications regarding pandemic preparedness.

All media and other external inquiries relating to the organizations pandemic preparedness will be forwarded to the Senior Management Team who will develop and issue approved responses.

Rationale There is an expectation that companies will develop a pandemic preparedness plan. As part of their pandemic/business continuity planning, companies that supply materials to or distribute and market products for BISNO may ask if the company has developed a pandemic plan. Response to such inquiries must be factual and consistent, and inspire confidence in BISNO.

Ownership Chief Executive Officer

Section 3 Service & Business Continuity

3.1 Pandemic Preparedness Plan to Compliment Other Emergency Plans

Pandemic response action plans developed by BISNO are to be used in conjunction with other existing policies and procedures.

Rationale Pandemic preparedness planning does not stand alone but complements existing emergency plans. This plan has a medical focus and it details the actions that should be taken to maintain employee health.

Ownership Pandemic Preparedness Team

3.2 Influenza Manager

The Resource Director and/or designate will be appointed as the “Influenza Manager.”

The “Influenza Manager” will keep records of the pandemic flu impact status on local employees and will prepare and distribute internal reports on the number of employees affected and the general status of the location’s workforce. These reports will be maintained following normal privacy guidelines.

Rationale During a pandemic, a significant number of employees may be infected. Employees who recover from the infection are expected to be immune to the pandemic virus and will no longer be at risk.

It is important that BISNO tracks the “influenza status” of its workforce as this will allow the effective use of personnel, thereby ensuring business continuity and reducing risk to noninfected employees.

Ownership Resource Director

Section 4 Optimizing Employee Health

4.1 Optimizing Employee Health

BISNO encourages its employees to maintain optimum health.

Rationale Persons who are debilitated or those with chronic illness may be more susceptible to pandemic flu. Optimizing health prior to a pandemic may reduce its impact on employees.

Health strategies to achieve this may include:

- Encourage employees to utilize wellness benefits
- Programs to promote health improvement and wellness
- Smoking cessation programs
- Programs to encourage better management of chronic disease
- Promotion of Employee/Family Assistance Programs (EFAP)
- Immunization clinics

Ownership Joint Occupational Health & Safety Committee

4.2 Seasonal Influenza Vaccination

BISNO will encourage an annual seasonal influenza vaccination for employees.

Rationale Seasonal (annual) flu vaccination is not protective against pandemic flu but, nevertheless, is a valuable benefit for employees for the following reasons:

- Seasonal flu is a serious illness, which annually causes severe illness to a number of people. Seasonal flu most often is concentrated with individuals with extremes of age, the infirm, and those with chronic illness.
- Being immune against seasonal flu would reduce the chance of co-infection with other flu viral strains.

The method for recommending and ensuring seasonal flu vaccination will vary.

Ownership Joint Occupational Health & Safety Committee

Section 5 Reduction of Infection Risk

5.1 Reducing Risk of Employees Becoming Infected Outside BISNO Sites

BISNO will provide guidance to employees to help prevent them from becoming infected with pandemic flu virus while outside BISNO sites.

Rationale A pandemic flu could significantly reduce BISNO's workforce for the duration of the pandemic. Modelling suggests that during the pandemic, initial absences may reach up to 50% due to fear, infection and caring for infected family members.

General hygiene measures, avoidance of infected persons, together with encouraging employees to obtain Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) will provide some protection from infection. The organization may consider stockpiling PPE in advance as stocks are limited, and production and delivery are anticipated to be disrupted during a pandemic.

Ownership Pandemic Preparedness Team

5.2 Reducing Risk of the Introduction of Virus into Facilities

When the risk of transmission of pandemic flu virus between people in a given site or community setting becomes significant, BISNO will implement systems to screen for potentially infected employees, individuals in service, and visitors to prevent them from entering the workplace. Strategies to permit certain employees to work from home will be examined.

Employees who are sick will remain absent from work until they have fully recovered and are no longer infectious.

Rationale BISNO will strive to provide a working environment that limits entry of the pandemic flu virus. Screening for employees who are infected with pandemic flu virus, although not 100% effective, could reduce transmission within BISNO sites. PPE may be required to help limit entry of pandemic flu virus.

Employees, individuals in service and visitors who want to gain access to BISNO sites will undergo screening and may not have a body temperature greater than 100.4F (38C) degrees.

Ownership Influenza Manager

5.3 Reducing Risk of Virus Transmission in Facilities

BISNO will implement processes to reduce the risk of transmission of pandemic flu virus within its sites.

Rationale Pandemic flu virus is mainly transmitted by the droplet method where infected persons who cough, sneeze or talk “spray” droplets from their mouth and nose. Typically these droplets can spread for up to one meter (3 feet). If a droplet is inhaled, it may transmit infection. If a droplet lands on a hard surface, flu virus can remain active for up to 48 hours. Shared surfaces such as door handles, desk tops, telephones, computer keyboards, etc. are also possible methods of transmitting virus from person to person.

Processes to limit transmission between people may require PPE.

Ownership Influenza Manager

Section 6 Management of Infected/Potentially Infected Employees

6.1 Employees Will Not Be Disadvantaged

BISNO has developed policies that ensure employees declaring possible or confirmed infection with pandemic flu are not disadvantaged.

Persons who demonstrate infection will be entitled to sick leave benefits in line with existing leave policies. The Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA) will provide the framework for leave approval.

FMLA provisions will also apply for parents and dependent care givers who are absent to attend to dependents suffering from pandemic flu.

Rationale Employees who are sick will remain away from work until they have recovered to reduce the spread of pandemic flu (or any infectious disease) within the organization.

Some employees may decide they want to continue to come to work however, BISNO will ensure that workers who are sick with, or may have been exposed to, pandemic flu do not come to work. Employees will not be disadvantaged for staying at home due to illness or to care for ill dependents.

Ownership Senior Management

6.2 Treatment of Employees Suffering Pandemic Influenza

BISNO will implement processes to ensure the optimal management of employees who may have developed pandemic influenza. If the employee is identified on screening before entering a site and if the employee is identified when within a site.

Rationale Employees who are identified to have possible pandemic influenza at door screening will be refused admittance to either of BISNO locations. The next step will depend on the employee's clinical condition and local health regulations.

Employees who develop the symptoms of pandemic influenza while at work are a risk to other employees and individuals in service. Processes of how to best manage this situation with as little risk to other employees and individuals in service and as little contamination of the work environment as possible will be implemented.

Other aspects to be considered include:

- Transportation procedures
- Establish relationships with local medical facilities that can provide care for infected employees
- Liaison with local health care authorities
- Evacuation of ill employees
- Financial assistance

Ownership Senior Management

6.3 Contact Tracing

Contact tracing will be carried out where practical in conjunction with government or other health agencies.

Rationale Contact tracing is the process whereby persons who have been in contact with a confirmed or suspected case of an infectious disease are traced. Once identified, these "contacts" may be quarantined to prevent further spread of the disease and/or encouraged to seek treatment to prevent them becoming ill or to reduce the severity of the illness should they become ill. In pandemic phases 4 and 5, and early in phase 6, there may be value in contact tracing. Later in phase 6, when the virus is "everywhere", contact tracing is probably of little value.

Ownership Influenza Manager

Section 7 Management of Traveling Employees

7.1 Out of Town Travel

BISNO will implement out of town travel procedures aimed at reducing the risk of travelling employees becoming infected by pandemic flu and reducing the risk of travelling employees becoming stranded in other cities should travel restrictions be imposed.

The procedures will detail screening or quarantine requirements for employees returning from affected areas.

Non-essential travel will be stopped in areas of high-risk during the pandemic.

Rationale Certain countries/regions may be at “higher” risk for pandemic influenza during certain phases of the pandemic.

Travel restrictions and quarantine imposed by BISNO may reduce the risk of travellers being infected and introducing the virus into the workplace.

National governments may suddenly implement border closures, restrictions or quarantine measures, in an attempt to contain an outbreak or protect a country from infection.

Ownership Senior Management

Section 8 Antiviral Medication

8.1 Antiviral Medication

BISNO will monitor the availability and distribution of antiviral medications as part of its overall pandemic preparedness plan.

Rationale Specific medical intervention for pandemic flu is limited to vaccination and antiviral medication. Vaccination will not be fully developed until after a pandemic has commenced, and it is unlikely to be available in less than three months in any sufficient quantity.

Ownership Pandemic Preparedness Team
