

**Policy & Procedure Manual**

---

**PANDEMIC PLAN – R-X-11**

---

**POLICY:**

OPTIONS NORTHWEST strives to protect the health and safety individual's they support and staff during a pandemic. A preparedness process and guideline are in place to minimize the impact of a pandemic.

In preparation for a pandemic, OPTIONS NORTHWEST will rely on the information provided by Thunder Bay District Health Unit Health Unit, Ontario Public Health, and the Ministry of Children, World Health Organization (WHO), Community and Social Services (MCCSS) to understand the extent and the severity of the outbreak to make timely decisions.

The Agency will balance the needs of the community and protection of staff from harm, and has chosen to divide the pandemic scenario into three phases:

1. Awareness Phase (Pandemic Alert)
2. Escalation Phase
3. Epidemic phase

The implementation of the plan will be gradually upgraded according to the extent and the severity of the pandemic situation in according to the communication issued by the Thunder Bay District Health Unit, Ontario Public Health, World Health Organization (WHO), and MCCSS.

**PURPOSE:**

To protect the health and safety of individuals and staff and minimize the impact of a pandemic through established guidelines and procedures.

The management team including Senior Directors, Managers, the Health and Safety Coordinator and the Health Care Consultant have the responsibility for activating the Pandemic Plan based on the communication bulletins issued by the Thunder Bay District Health Unit, Ontario Public Health, and MCCSS.

Once the plan has been activated, the management team including Senior Directors, Managers, the Health and Safety Coordinator and the Health Care Consultant will monitor the Thunder Bay District Health Unit, Ontario Public Health, and MCCSS and other government websites for regular updates. Regular communications will be provided to employees, union partners, and any other community partners.

**DEFINITIONS:**

***What you should know about a flu pandemic:*** The Government of Ontario published a pamphlet to educate the general public about pandemics. Some questions and answers from the pamphlet are reprinted as below:

***What is a pandemic?*** A pandemic is distinguished by its scope. It becomes a worldwide epidemic, or pandemic, when a disease spreads easily and rapidly through many countries and regions of the world and affects a large percentage of the population where it spreads.

***What is the difference between an ordinary flu and a pandemic?***

1. A pandemic flu can appear very similar to seasonal flu. Because people have little or no immunity to a pandemic flu virus, the spread of the disease can occur more quickly than with an ordinary flu.
2. The symptoms are the same: fever, headache, aches and pains, tiredness, stuffy nose, sneezing, sore throat and cough. However, they can be much more severe with a pandemic flu and affect people who do not normally suffer as much from seasonal flu – such as younger, healthy adults.
3. Both ordinary flu and a pandemic flu are spread in the same way. The flu virus is spread when someone with the flu coughs or sneezes, and droplets containing the virus come in contact with another person's nose, mouth or eyes. It can also be spread when people with the flu cough or sneeze into their hands and contaminate things they touch, such as a door handle. Other people can become infected if they touch the same object and then touch their face.

The World Health Organization (WHO) is the United Nations health agency and respond to threats and occurrences of an influenza pandemic. The WHO pre-defines the pandemic phases\*\* as below to provide consistency and predictability of the measures to be taken by each region or nation

<b>Interpandemic Period</b>	<b>Phase 1.</b> No new influenza virus subtypes have been detected in humans. An influenza virus subtype that has caused human infection may be present in animals. If present in animals, the risk of human infection or disease is considered to be low.  <b>Phase 2.</b> No new influenza virus subtypes have been detected in humans. However, a circulating animal influenza virus subtype poses a substantial risk of human disease.
<b>Pandemic Alert Period</b>	<b>Phase 3.</b> Human infection(s) with a new subtype, but no human-to-human spread, or at most rare instances of spread to a close contact.  <b>Phase 4.</b> Small cluster(s) with limited human-to-

	human transmission but spread is highly localized, suggesting that the virus is not well adapted to humans.  <b>Phase 5.</b> Larger cluster(s) but human-to-human spread still localized, suggesting that the virus is becoming increasingly better adapted to humans, but may not yet be fully transmissible. (Substantial Pandemic Risk)
<b>Pandemic Period</b>	<b>Phase 6.</b> Pandemic: Increase and sustained transmission in general population.

**PROCEDURE:**

**AWARENESS PHASE (PANDEMIC ALERT PHASE 4 & 5)**

Communicate to staff, individuals, visitors, students, families, union partners and public with a professional message, including information on appropriate health care.

Monitoring Process: The management team including Senior Directors, Managers, the Health and Safety Coordinator and the Health Care Consultant will be responsible for monitoring the occurrence of pandemic illness in the community through the following web sites:

- a) Thunder Bay District Health Unit
- b) Ontario Public Health
- c) Ministry of Community Children and Social Services
- d) Ministry of Health and Long-term Care
- e) Government of Canada, Pandemic Influenza
- f) Public Safety Canada, Pandemic Preparedness

**Communication Strategy:**

The management team including Senior Directors, Managers, the Health and Safety Coordinator and the Health Care Consultant will appoint a person to be responsible for disseminating information to staff, individuals, families, volunteers and other key stakeholders through e-mail, web, phone calls, poster and brochure.

- a) Inform staff, individuals, families, students, volunteers, union partners and other key stakeholders of the severity of the pandemic illness in the community.
- b) Provide basic information and understanding of universal precautions and other related transmission-based precautions.
- c) Provide basic information and understanding of pandemic flu illness.

**Precaution Measures:**

- a) Advise staff and students to take influenza vaccination if applicable.
- b) Educate individuals about personal hygiene and self precaution during a pandemic scenario.
- c) Implement any and all transmission-based precautions required.
- d) Have pertinent policies reviewed by all staff.

### **ESCALATION LEVEL (PANDEMIC RESPONSE, PHASE 6)**

Once the Thunder Bay District Health Unit announces the city is in a pandemic period (Phase 6), the management team including Senior Directors, Managers, the Health and Safety Coordinator and the Health Care Consultant will review the situation and may upgrade the internal plan to the “Escalation Phase”. Once the committee and Executive Director raises it to “Escalation Phase”, the following protocols will then be implemented:

#### **Protocols:**

- a) All individual activities or appointments in the office will be cancelled.
- b) Limited home or community visits by clinical staff.
- c) Provide personal protective equipment to all staff as appropriate.
- d) Individuals or his/her family will be advised to stay home and seek medical help if they have any symptoms of flu or other communicable disease.
- e) Set up a screening tool and all entrants to all homes and office locations will be pre-screened for any symptoms of flu or other communicable disease as appropriate when they show up to any location run or operated by OPTIONS NORTHWEST.
- f) Student placement may be limited or cancelled.

#### **Infection Control Protocols:**

- a) Environmental Cleaning R-X-5
- b) Employee’s Responsibility in the Control of Infections Diseases R-X-9
- c) Influenza/Outbreak Management R-X-8
- d) Routine Practices for Residential Settings R-X-4
- e) Infection Disease and Mode of Transmission R-X-2
- f) Isolation R-X-3

#### **Human Resource Policies (Refer to Memo’s circulated during Pandemic):**

- a) Routine Practices for Infection Prevention HR-XI-11
- b) Emergency Preparedness Plan

#### **Administration Procedures:**

- a) Monitor and communicate to staff daily regarding the level of pandemic activities.
- b) Provide personal protective equipment as required.
- c) Encourage hand washing for anyone entering OPTIONS NORTHWEST office locations and cancel all non-essential face-to-face meetings and conduct critical meetings via telephone or video conference. Enforce or encourage? Is hand sanitizer sufficient in place of hand washing? Change it to read at the beginning – Encourage hand hygiene instead of enforce hand washing
- d) Discuss with education partners regarding student placement.

**EPIDEMIC/PANDEMIC PHASE (PANDEMIC RESPONSE, PHASE 6)**

In coordination with the Thunder Bay District Health Unit response to a pandemic situation, the management team including Senior Directors, Managers, the Health and Safety Coordinator and the Health Care Consultant may initiate an Emergency Closure Plan. Once the Emergency Closure is declared, the organization will stop delivering services where feasible until the threat from a pandemic is over.

**RECOVERY:**

Following the Emergency Closure procedure, the management team including Senior Directors, Managers, the Health and Safety Coordinator and the Health Care Consultant will meet daily via telephone or video conference and monitor the situation off site.

Board of Directors meetings will be held via teleconference and weekly updates will be provided to the Board by the Executive Director.

**RECOMMENDED BY:** Human Resources and  
Coordinator, Health & Safety

**APPENDICES: 0**

**OPERATIONAL ACCOUNTABILITY:** Administration, Finance, Human Resources,  
Community Services Administration, Community Services (all)

**ORIGINAL POLICY DATE:**

**AUTHORIZED BY:** Executive Director

**SIGNATURE:**

