

# Pandemic Influenza Plan – Public Communications

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For more information contact the Office of Public Information at [MediaInfo@health.mo.gov](mailto:MediaInfo@health.mo.gov) or 573-751-6003

## PURPOSE

The Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services (DHSS) public information staff will coordinate and deliver public health and risk assessment information during an influenza pandemic. To achieve this, DHSS public information staff will work closely with the Missouri State Emergency Management Agency's (SEMA) public information staff, other state agency public information officers and with local public health agencies (LPHAs).

Overall objectives:

- To help protect the health and well-being of Missourians by providing information that is accurate, timely and pertinent.
- To ensure informed, prudent public action.
- To meet the needs of the news media.
- To coordinate with other agencies involved in responding to the pandemic and providing information to the public.

## EMERGENCY RESPONSIBILITIES

The Public Information Team includes:

- Chief, Office of Public Information (OPI)
- One Public Information Coordinator, OPI
- One video production specialist, OPI
- Health and Senior Services Manager-B1
- Office support staff in OPI

The lead DHSS public information officer (Lead PIO) will be designated by DHSS leadership and emergency response command staff based on PIO availability. The Lead PIO will work in coordination with other state and federal officials, and will:

1. Use the news media and various other communication systems (e.g., social media) to inform and instruct individuals, families, businesses and industries about health and medical factors involved in the influenza pandemic.
  - a. Fact sheets, key messages and other resources, which can be used in preparing pandemic-related information, will be maintained in the Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services' Emergency Response Center (ERC) information O drive.
  - b. The Lead PIO will ensure that DHSS uses its website to provide important health and safety information for targeted groups. Groups will include the general public, health care providers, first responders, school officials, child care providers, business leaders, nursing home staff and residents and at-risk populations. Information posted on the site will include news releases, fact sheets, advice on how to limit the spread of influenza and other pertinent health information.
  - c. The Lead PIO will coordinate with LPHAs and PIOs from other state and federal agencies to ensure that consistent messages are delivered.
  - d. All messages and other public information activities will be coordinated with the State Emergency Operations Center (SEOC) Joint Information Center (JIC), if and when it is activated, according to Incident Command System (ICS) protocol.

2. Ensure the accuracy, timeliness and appropriateness of all health and medical information before being released to the media.
3. Respond to and record requests for health or medical information from the SEOC JIC and/or other emergency response partners as appropriate.
4. Assist SEOC JIC as requested.
5. Update DHSS staff and LPHAs, including the LPHA PIOs, with messages released to the media.
6. Update the DHSS director or designee regularly and/or as requested on public information activities.

## **STANDARD OPERATING PROCEDURES**

1. Primary Public Information Responsibility:
  - a. The Public Information Office works with OPI chief or designated Lead PIO to make staffing decisions (including shifts and locations) for PIOs assigned to the DHSS ERC and to the SEOC JIC, based on staff availability.
2. Staff Assignments:
  - a. According to established DHSS emergency response plans and protocols, DHSS PIOs are trained to serve on emergency response teams in the DHSS ERC (in the Public Information Section) and/or at the SEOC JIC—some PIOs have been pre-assigned to either a DHSS ERC or SEOC JIC team and will report to their assigned location as directed and based on his/her availability.
  - b. The OPI chief may also deploy members of the public information staff to obtain, evaluate and coordinate available data and information at other locations including (but not limited to):
    - ❖ Strategic National Stockpile (SNS) distribution or dispensing sites.
    - ❖ Regional or district offices and/or the site of the bioterrorism event.
    - ❖ The need for clerical support will be evaluated and assignments made accordingly.
3. The PIO on duty in the ERC will offer support to LPHAs as needed. If possible, the state will provide a PIO on-site at a LPHA.
4. The OPI Chief will designate staff for the SEOC, as well as any other JIC that may be established during emergency response operations.
5. The PIO on duty in the ERC will participate in all briefings and daily staff updates.
6. During an influenza pandemic, it may be necessary for members of the Public Information Team to work from home. OPI staff are assigned laptops, which allows them to continue operations off-site.
7. Public Information Distribution (news releases, public health statements, fact sheets).
  - a. As necessary and appropriate, DHSS ERC public information staff will draft news releases and other public health information using information provided by program staff, verify the information provided and obtain all necessary approvals. Approval for all outgoing public information must be obtained from the DHSS director, the director's designee, the DHSS ERC Branch Director and the DHSS OPI chief.
  - b. Staff will ensure that messages provided to the public are consistent, coordinated and timely and shared with appropriate state and local partner agencies. If the SEOC JIC is activated, all public information will be sent to the JIC for final coordination, approval and release. The OPI chief will determine the distribution procedures that best fit the situation. The DHSS OPI maintains the following lists:
    - All media.

- Regional Media. In the rare case that a news release would be sent only to a certain region of the states, a list of regional media can be extracted from the All Media list.
- c. Completed news releases will be posted on the DHSS website with the assistance of the technology staff in the Office of Administration, Information Technology Services Division (ITSD). The Web group staff is available through a call-down list 24 hours a day, seven days a week.
- d. News releases will be distributed to the Governor’s Office, SEMA, LPHAs, partner agencies, appropriate DHSS staff, lawmakers and others, as applicable.

## MESSAGE COORDINATION FORUM

- Mental Health Key Messages. Hard copy available at Public Information workstation in ERC or on the Missouri Department of Mental Health’s website at: <https://dmh.mo.gov/media/pdf/pandemic-communications-guidebook>.
- LPHAs and stakeholders will be notified that the webpage is a resource for media inquiries.
- The DHSS Public Information Team will ensure that messages are kept up-to-date and will contact Pandemic Influenza stakeholders for updated messages.
- A webpage will be created with messages regarding emotional and mental health aspects of an influenza pandemic. A link to that page will be made available on the DHSS main influenza webpage.
  1. Public Information Activities Status.
    - a. According to current DHSS media relations policy, all incoming media calls will be referred to/through the OPI for Department response. If necessary, DHSS PIOs and additional support staff will be requested by the OPI chief or designee to assist with addressing media calls and requests. In the absence of the OPI chief, the designated Lead PIO will work closely with the DHSS Director’s Office, State Lead PIO and/or Governor’s Office to develop and approve appropriate media responses and public messages.
    - b. If the SEOC JIC is activated, all media calls will be referred to the JIC according to established protocols and in coordination with the OPI. The DHSS ERC Public Information Section will assist with media relations as requested by the SEMA JIC.
    - c. During an emergency, the public information staff or support staff will ensure that all e-mail messages received through the DHSS website are answered.
  2. DHSS ERC.
    - a. The DHSS ERC Public Information Team leader will coordinate, in consultation with the OPI chief and/or DHSS Lead PIO, schedules and manage continuity of Public Information Section activities.
    - b. Each ERC team member will keep record of activities during shifts worked, according to current ERC protocol and as directed by the ERC Branch Director.
    - c. All additions to the emergency webpages will be routed through the Lead PIO or designee for review following established procedures.
  3. News Conferences.
    - a. All media requests will be referred to the SEOC JIC and any contact with the media will be in close coordination with the JIC.
  4. Website.
    - a. News releases, fact sheets, health alerts and other pertinent health information will be posted on the DHSS web-site in a timely basis.
    - b. During an emergency, DHSS staff will be reassigned duties to respond to e-mail received through the DHSS website and to monitor residents’ concerns and questions.

- All uploads to the DHSS website during an emergency situation will be routed through the OPI and after hours through the DHSS ERC Public Information Section. When the ERC is activated, the LPHA Management workstation may be using a special LPHA emergency webpage. The Public Information Section will review any DHSS information for posting to this webpage and then forward to the website staff. This will ensure consistency with the department's webpage. The LPHA Management workstation will monitor the webpage and answer questions from the LPHAs. Only information that does not require immediate response will be posted to the LPHA emergency webpage.
5. Translations.
    - a. DHSS will use the Missouri statewide contract for translating messages and materials into other languages.
      - More information on the translation contract is available in the Emergency Response Communications Plan Chapter 9 or on the O Drive at O:\CERT\++++DSR Work Stations++++\DSR Public Info\EMERGENCY Public Information\DHSS\_Communications\_Plan\09. Translation.
    - b. The website will provide links to basic information in other languages, providing the information is from a credible source, such as CDC, the World Health Organization (WHO) and other states' health departments. The Public Information Team will be responsible for ensuring that the messages are consistent with policies adopted by the DHSS director and the Office of the Governor.
    - c. For phone calls, the ERC Duty Officer will transfer non-English speaking residents to LanguageLine. See the ERC Procedures Manual for details.
    - d. The top five languages spoken in Missouri: 1. Spanish; 2. Bosnian; 3. Korean; 4. Vietnamese; and 5 Somali. Information for specific language needs in metropolitan areas should be coordinated with appropriate LPHA PIOs.
    - e. General fact sheets on what to do before, during or after an emergency are available in Spanish, Bosnian, Vietnamese, Korean and Somali on the DHSS website <http://www.health.mo.gov/emergencies/readyin3/factsheets.php>.
    - f. The *Ready in 3 Family Safety Guide and Preparing for Pandemic Flu: A Community Guide* booklets are available in Spanish, Bosnian and Braille. The emergency threats brochure is printed in Spanish. <http://www.health.mo.gov/emergencies/panflu/pangen.php>.
    - g. A video aimed at motivating Missourians who use American Sign Language to prepare in advance for emergency situations is available in DVD and VHS format. <http://health.mo.gov/emergencies/readyin3/videos.php>.
  6. Emergency Alert System (EAS).
    - a. SEMA has a system in place to broadcast messages through the EAS. DHSS will work with SEMA Communications Section, 573-526-9201.
  7. Archived Health Alerts, Advisories, Updates, and Guidances are found at: <http://health.mo.gov/emergencies/ert/alertsadvisories/index.php>.

## Pandemic Influenza Resources

### Latest Information/Internet Resources

Title	Source	Address
Latest Information on the Pandemic Flu	Office of the Governor	<a href="https://governor.mo.gov/">https://governor.mo.gov/</a>
	Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services	<a href="http://www.health.mo.gov/">http://www.health.mo.gov/</a>
Pandemic Influenza	Centers for Disease Control and Prevention	<a href="https://www.cdc.gov/flu/pandemic-resources/">https://www.cdc.gov/flu/pandemic-resources/</a>
Influenza pandémica	Centers for Disease Control and Prevention	<a href="https://espanol.cdc.gov/enes/flu/pandemic-resources/index.htm">https://espanol.cdc.gov/enes/flu/pandemic-resources/index.htm</a>
Pandemic Influenza Information	Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services	<a href="http://health.mo.gov/emergencies/panflu/pange n.php">http://health.mo.gov/emergencies/panflu/pange n.php</a>
	Centers for Disease Control and Prevention	<a href="https://www.cdc.gov/flu/pandemic-resources/basics/index.html">https://www.cdc.gov/flu/pandemic-resources/basics/index.html</a>
Pandemic Influenza	World Health Organization	<a href="http://www.who.int/csr/disease/influenza/en/index.html">http://www.who.int/csr/disease/influenza/en/index.html</a>
Pandemic Influenza Information for Medical Professionals	Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services	<a href="http://health.mo.gov/emergencies/panflu/panflu .php">http://health.mo.gov/emergencies/panflu/panflu .php</a>
Pandemic Influenza Information for Planners	Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services	<a href="http://health.mo.gov/emergencies/panflu/panflu .php">http://health.mo.gov/emergencies/panflu/panflu .php</a>
Pandemic Influenza Information for Business	Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services	<a href="http://health.mo.gov/emergencies/panflu/panbu siness.php">http://health.mo.gov/emergencies/panflu/panbu siness.php</a>
State and Local Government Planning	Centers for Disease Control and Prevention	<a href="https://www.cdc.gov/flu/pandemic-resources/planning-preparedness/state-local-government-planning.html">https://www.cdc.gov/flu/pandemic-resources/planning-preparedness/state-local-government-planning.html</a>
School Planning	U.S. Department of Health and Human Services	<a href="http://www2.ed.gov/admins/lead/safety/emerg encyplan/pandemic/planning-guide/planning-guide.pdf">http://www2.ed.gov/admins/lead/safety/emerg encyplan/pandemic/planning-guide/planning-guide.pdf</a>

**Printed Materials & Tools**

<b>Title</b>	<b>Source</b>	<b>Address</b>
Preparing for Pandemic Flu: A Community Guide, English	Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services	<a href="http://health.mo.gov/emergencies/panflu/pangen.php">http://health.mo.gov/emergencies/panflu/pangen.php</a> <a href="http://www.health.mo.gov/emergencies/readyin3/mainreadyform.php#english">http://www.health.mo.gov/emergencies/readyin3/mainreadyform.php#english</a>
Preparing for Pandemic Flu: A Community Guide, Spanish	Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services	<a href="http://health.mo.gov/emergencies/panflu/pangen.php">http://health.mo.gov/emergencies/panflu/pangen.php</a> <a href="http://www.health.mo.gov/emergencies/readyin3/mainreadyform.php#spanish">http://www.health.mo.gov/emergencies/readyin3/mainreadyform.php#spanish</a>
Preparing for Pandemic Flu: A Community Guide, Bosnian	Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services	<a href="http://health.mo.gov/emergencies/panflu/pangen.php">http://health.mo.gov/emergencies/panflu/pangen.php</a> <a href="http://www.health.mo.gov/emergencies/readyin3/mainreadyform.php#bosnian">http://www.health.mo.gov/emergencies/readyin3/mainreadyform.php#bosnian</a>
Preparing for Pandemic Flu: A Community Guide, Braille	Missouri Department of Health and Senior Services	<a href="http://www.health.mo.gov/emergencies/readyin3/mainreadyform.php#braille">http://www.health.mo.gov/emergencies/readyin3/mainreadyform.php#braille</a>

### DHSS and Stakeholders Spokespersons for Pandemic Influenza

Agency	Spokesperson / Backup	Title/Area of Expertise	Phone	Fax	Email
Department of Health and Senior Services	Chief, Office of Public Information	Chief, Office of Public Information	573-751-6003	573-751-6041	<a href="mailto:MediaInfo@health.mo.gov">MediaInfo@health.mo.gov</a>
	Jeremy Wilson	Emergency Response Coordinator	573-526-3784	573-526-8389	<a href="mailto:Jeremy.Wilson@health.mo.gov">Jeremy.Wilson@health.mo.gov</a>
Department of Public Safety/State Emergency Management Agency	Mike O'Connell	Director of Communications	573-751-4819	573-751-5399	<a href="mailto:Mike.oconnell@dps.mo.gov">Mike.oconnell@dps.mo.gov</a>
Department of Agriculture	Sami Jo Freeman	Communications Director	573-751-2969	573-751-1784	<a href="mailto:samijo.freeman@mda.mo.gov">samijo.freeman@mda.mo.gov</a>
Missouri Department of Conservation (MDC)	Dr. Sherri Russell	MDC Veterinarian	573-291-7695	573-526-5582	<a href="mailto:Sherri.Russell@mdc.mo.gov">Sherri.Russell@mdc.mo.gov</a>
	Doreen Mengel	Waterfowl Ecologist	573-815-7901, ext. 2938	573-815-7902	<a href="mailto:Doreen.Mengel@mdc.mo.gov">Doreen.Mengel@mdc.mo.gov</a>
	Andrew Raedeke	Waterfowl Ecologist	573-815-7901, ext. 2939	573-815-7902	<a href="mailto:Andrew.Raedeke@mdc.mo.gov">Andrew.Raedeke@mdc.mo.gov</a>
Missouri Hospital Association	Dave Dillon	Vice President of Public and Media Relations	573-893-3700 x1311	573-893-2809	<a href="mailto:ddillon@mhanet.com">ddillon@mhanet.com</a>
	Mary Becker	Senior Vice President of Strategic	573-893-3700 x1303	573-893-2809	<a href="mailto:mbecker@mhanet.com">mbecker@mhanet.com</a>

Agency	Spokesperson / Backup	Title/Area of Expertise	Phone	Fax	Email
		Partnerships and Communications			
American Red Cross	Stacy Burks	State Relations Representative	417-832-9500 Ex. 3101		<a href="mailto:stacy.burks@redcross.org">stacy.burks@redcross.org</a>
	JoAnn Woody	External Relations Program Manager	918-852-0757		<a href="mailto:JoAnn.Woody@redcross.org">JoAnn.Woody@redcross.org</a>
	Kath Mayne	Disaster Program Manager	573-291-0776		<a href="mailto:Kath.Mayne@redcross.org">Kath.Mayne@redcross.org</a>
Department. of Elementary and Secondary Education	Nancy Bowles	Communications Coordinator	573-751-3469		<a href="mailto:Nancy.Bowles@dese.mo.gov">Nancy.Bowles@dese.mo.gov</a>
Missouri Chamber of Commerce	Karen Buschmann	VP of Communications	573-634-3511	573-634-8855	<a href="mailto:kbuschmann@mochamber.com">kbuschmann@mochamber.com</a>
	Dan Mehan	President and CEO	573-634-3511	573-634-8855	<a href="mailto:dmehan@mochamber.com">dmehan@mochamber.com</a>
Local Public Health Agencies	Contact your Local Public Health Agency				Directory of LPHAs can be found at <a href="http://health.mo.gov/living/lpha/lphas.php">http://health.mo.gov/living/lpha/lphas.php</a>



**Message Development Worksheet for Emergency Communication**

**First, consider the following:**

Audience:	Purpose of Message:	Method of delivery:
<input type="checkbox"/> Relationship to event <input type="checkbox"/> Demographics (age, language, education, culture) <input type="checkbox"/> Level of outrage (based on risk principles)	<input type="checkbox"/> Give facts/update <input type="checkbox"/> Rally to action <input type="checkbox"/> Clarify event status <input type="checkbox"/> Address rumors <input type="checkbox"/> Satisfy media requests	<input type="checkbox"/> Print media release <input type="checkbox"/> Web release <input type="checkbox"/> Through spokesperson (TV or in-person appearance) <input type="checkbox"/> Radio <input type="checkbox"/> Other (e.g., recorded phone message)

**Six Basic Emergency Message Components:**

1. Expression of empathy: \_\_\_\_\_

2. Clarifying Facts/Call for Action:

Who \_\_\_\_\_

What \_\_\_\_\_

Where \_\_\_\_\_

When \_\_\_\_\_

Why \_\_\_\_\_

How \_\_\_\_\_

Add information on what residents should do or not do at this time \_\_\_\_\_

3. What we don't know: \_\_\_\_\_

4. Process to get answers: \_\_\_\_\_

5. Statement of commitment: \_\_\_\_\_

6. Referrals: \_\_\_\_\_

For more information: \_\_\_\_\_

Next scheduled update: \_\_\_\_\_

Finally, check your message for the following:

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Positive action steps</li> <li>• Honest/open tone</li> <li>• Applied risk communication principles</li> <li>• Test for clarity</li> <li>• Use simple words, short sentences</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Avoid jargon</li> <li>• Avoid judgmental phrases</li> <li>• Avoid humor</li> <li>• Avoid extreme speculation</li> </ul> |
|---|--|

*Source: CDC–Crisis and Emergency Risk Communication, CDCynergy*