Healthy planning for a pandemic event
A pandemic occurs when a new virus that is different from seasonal viruses emerges and spreads quickly between people, causing illness worldwide. Most people will lack immunity to the pandemic virus. Pandemic viruses can be more severe, causing more deaths than seasonal strains. Because it is a new virus, a vaccine may not be available right away. A pandemic could therefore overwhelm normal operations in schools, workplaces, and other community settings.

Help slow the spread
When a new virus emerges, it can take up to 6 months before a pandemic vaccine is widely available. When a vaccine is not available, nonpharmaceutical interventions (NPIs) are the best way to help slow the spread. They include personal, community, and environmental actions. These actions are most effective when used together.

As a community leader, you play a key role in flu readiness. Planning for and practicing NPI actions will help your organization respond more effectively when an actual emergency occurs. Safeguard the health of your workers and the people you serve by having a contingency plan in place now that includes provisions for pandemic illness events.

Work with your local health department to identify ways to provide public health services to community members in the event of a severe pandemic
A pandemic can last for several months. Public health officials may recommend additional community actions based on the severity of the pandemic that limit exposure, such as flexible sick-leave and telework policies.

Establishing ongoing communication with your local public health department now can give you access to relevant information before and during a pandemic. Having a good contingency plan in place and developing flexible policies and procedures to accommodate public health recommendations can help reduce infection.

Community-wide planning is essential to responding to and recovering from a pandemic.

Update your existing emergency operations plan
- Meet with your emergency operations coordinator or planning team to update your emergency operations plan
- Establish relationships with key community partners and stakeholders

Address key prevention strategies in your emergency operations plan. These include:
- Promote the daily practice of everyday preventative actions at all times
- Provide pandemic prevention supplies at your organization
- Plan for worker absences
- Develop a risk-assessment and risk-management process for your organization
- Develop a method for monitoring and tracking flu-related worker absences
- Review your process for planning events, programs, and services.
- Plan ways to continue essential services if on-site operations are reduced temporarily.
- Identify space that can be used to separate sick people
- Plan ways to increase space between people to at least 3 feet or limit face to face contact between people at your organization

Practice good personal health habits and plan for home-based actions to prevent spreading illnesses. You should:
- Practice and teach every day preventative actions now
- Plan to have extra supplies of important items on hand
- Choose a room in your home that can be used to separate sick household members from those who are healthy
- Discourage children and teens from gathering in large public areas and at events while school is dismissed

Put your emergency and communications plan into action!
- Stay informed about the local pandemic situation
- Implement NPI actions to protect your workers and those you serve
- Track worker absenteeism related to symptoms
- Implement your risk-assessment and risk-management plans

For more information, visit:
- [www.ready.gov/getinvolved](http://www.ready.gov/getinvolved)
- [www.cdc.gov/npi](http://www.cdc.gov/npi)