

Pandemic Influenza Plan

Central Georgia Technical College

Revised September 2009

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PURPOSE

The purpose of this plan is to provide guidance to Central Georgia Technical College faculty and staff in the event of the occurrence of pandemic influenza.

PHILOSOPHY

- This plan is integrated into the community pandemic planning process to the greatest extent possible
- CGTC will protect the life, health and safety of employees, students and others to the greatest extent possible
- Essential services will be maintained to the greatest extent possible
- Essential processes critical to the functioning of the college will be maintained to the greatest extent possible
- Instructional services will continue to be provided or re-established as rapidly as possible

INTRODUCTION

History's greatest killer always has been disease. Smallpox alone has killed hundreds of millions of people, more than that Black Death of the Middle Ages and all the wars of the 20th Century combined. Even as some of history's most infamous scourges - smallpox, polio, tuberculosis - are brought under control through vaccines and antibiotics, others such as HIV/AIDS, SARS, Ebola, Marburg, Monkey Pox, West Nile Virus and Hantavirus, have emerged.

Influenza pandemics have historically occurred at a rate of three per century. A pandemic occurs when a new viral strain is introduced into the human population. Three essential conditions must be met for an outbreak to begin:

1. A new flu virus must emerge from the animal reservoirs that have produced and harbored such viruses—one that has never infected human beings and therefore one for which no person has developed antibodies.
2. The virus has to make humans sick (most do not).
3. The virus must be able to spread efficiently from human-to-human.

Historic evidence teaches us that pandemic events are marathons and not sprints, with a series of waves that ebb and flow with varying degrees of illness that could last well over a year. The 1918 pandemic circled the globe three times before it was finally arrested – as much by the development of natural immunity to the virus as by any technological interventions.

The development of a global economy, increased global travel and an increase in population density make a future pandemic event a certainty, despite strides in medical technology and health care. Even a mildly virulent influenza will cause enough illness to impact daily life.

This plan identifies Central Georgia Technical College's protocols for maintaining continuity of operations while following advice and mandates from healthcare and Emergency Management professionals to help protect the community from an influenza pandemic.

GOALS

The overarching goal of Central Georgia Technical College during a pandemic influenza event is to safeguard the health of the faculty, staff and students; and, by doing so, to help protect the health of the community. The Administration of Central Georgia Technical College takes their obligations to the faculty, staff, students and community seriously and will not endanger lives by continuing operations if doing so would undermine the health of the individuals we serve. However, it would be just as irresponsible to believe the campus could shut down operations indefinitely without adversely affecting those same constituents. Therefore, the focus of this plan will be safely maintaining continuity of operations. Every effort will be made to continue services while complying with directives and initiatives from public health and Emergency Management professionals in regards to non-pharmaceutical interventions. If/when the situation becomes so dire that it does become necessary to discontinue services, our goal is to do so for the shortest duration and with the least disruption possible.

DEFINITIONS

Morbidity: The rate at which individuals become ill.

Mortality: The rate at which a pathogen (disease producer) causes death.

NPI: Non-pharmaceutical interventions –methods other than medications that are used to combat disease. These would include social distancing and personal protective equipment (PPE).

Pandemic: A widespread disease epidemic that affects many people around the world at the same time. A disease epidemic occurs when there are more cases of that disease than normal. A pandemic is a worldwide epidemic of a disease. An influenza pandemic may occur when a new influenza virus appears and the human population has no immunity against it.

Pandemic Severity Index: A scale for rating the virulence/severity of a pandemic based on mortality.

Response Triggers: A three-tiered activation guide using the Pandemic Severity Index to gauge responses to a pandemic.

Social Distancing: Keeping individuals a safe distance from each other, which may include discontinuing functions at which people congregate. The goal is to stop the spread of disease by reducing the numbers of people infected.

Virulence: The ability of any agent of infection to produce disease; the strength of a pathogen. The virulence of a virus is a measure of the severity of the disease it is capable of causing. A combination of morbidity and mortality is used to gauge virulence.

ASSUMPTIONS

- A new virus of moderate severity will have an attack rate of 30 – 35%.
- The first wave of a pandemic will likely be completed before a vaccine is available.
- When a vaccine is developed, the supply will be limited. A tier system for providing vaccines to those most at risk for infection will be developed and distributed by public health.
- Anti-viral medications to help relieve the symptoms of influenza in those infected will also be in limited supply.
- A 30% attack rate will translate into around 6,000 hospital admissions per week in the State of Georgia. The health care system will not be able to handle the surge in influx of patients. Plans must therefore include alternate care solutions, including infection prevention and non-pharmaceutical interventions such as social distancing.
- Other community services and general commerce will be greatly affected due to high numbers of workers absent because of their own illness, the illness of family members, or simply due to fear of infection.
- The pandemic will cause both an initial infection wave and subsequent re-infection waves in a given location at about eight-week intervals. Planning should be for a minimum of eight weeks.
- The World Health Organization (WHO) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) will utilize the Pandemic Severity Index to help organizations gauge appropriate response actions. The Pandemic Severity Index uses a rating scale (1 – 5) to describe the possible effects of the virus.

Pandemic Severity Index

Category	Case Fatality Rate	Expected Ill in Central GA	20th Century Experience
1	<0.1%	80,000	See Note
2	0.1 - < .05%	80K– 100,000	1957, 1968
3	0.5 - < 1.0%	171,000	None
4	1.0 - <2.0%	171,000	None
5	2.0% or more	>171,000	1918 Pandemic

NOTE: Seasonal influenza has approximately this case fatality rate each year but an illness rate of only around 10% because many individuals have immunity from prior exposure to the specific viruses we see each year.

RESPONSE STEPS

Central Georgia Technical College will follow the three-step system used by State of Georgia to assist organizations in determining when to activate their pandemic influenza plans. The three steps are:

Alert: Notification of critical systems and personnel; pre-event planning

Standby: Initiation of decision-making processes; mobilization of resources

Activation: Implementation of the plan

The following chart shows the triggers that will be used to determine when to increase steps. The triggers differ depending on the Pandemic Severity Index, which is rated from 1 (least severe) to 5 (most severe).

TRIGGERS FOR RESPONSE STEPS*

Pandemic Severity Index	Response Steps		
	Alert	Standby	Activation
	Notification of critical systems and personnel	Initiation of decision-making processes; mobilization of resources	Implementation
1	Widespread human outbreaks in multiple locations overseas	First human cases in North America	First laboratory confirmed cluster in the health district (central GA area)
2 and 3	Widespread human outbreaks in multiple locations overseas	First human cases in North America	First laboratory confirmed cluster in the health district (central GA area)
4 and 5	Confirmed human outbreak overseas	Widespread outbreaks in multiple locations overseas	First laboratory confirmed cluster in Georgia or adjoining states.

*At a Pandemic Severity Index of 1, which indicates the least severe level in terms of virulence, morbidity and mortality, full activation of this plan would occur when clusters of illness are confirmed in the CGTC area. A Pandemic Severity Index of 4-5 would indicate the most severe virulence, high morbidity and mortality rates, and a much more rapid rate of spread, and activation would take place when clusters of illness are confirmed even in neighboring states.

COLLEGE OPERATIONS DURING EACH RESPONSE STEP

The following is a list of anticipated action steps in response to the triggers above, and the staff who have lead responsibility for the action steps.

ALERT (and Pre-Event Stage)

President

- communicate with Technical College System of Georgia to determine the overall plan for technical colleges
- identify essential and critical College operations by priority
- identify provisions for potential alteration/extension of sick leave

- alert students, faculty and staff to stay home if they are sick, with sickness defined as having a fever, and to remain at home for 24 hours without medication after a fever is relieved. Anyone with a fever should stay home regardless of the cause.

Leadership Team

- develop contingency plans for rescheduling of classes should class cancellation eventually become necessary
- identify staff who can work from home
- develop alternative work schedules to keep school business on track should a “work from home” procedure become necessary. [One key to continuity of operations is to maintain classes and programs while keeping the students off campus (at home). CGTC will follow procedures for social distancing provided by public health officials. However, Faculty members can conceivably continue work from campus as long as students stay home.]
- develop a plan for continuing instruction through e-mail correspondence or via Angel Learning
- encourage staff with healthcare and medical credentials to be available to assist with needs at CGTC and to be aware of the need for volunteering within the community in other healthcare venues when there is no further need at CGTC

Pandemic Coordinator – Chair

(Vice Chair will assist as needed)

- monitor news and official reports of the status of the spread and penetration of the disease affecting the local and state population and report internally to the President
- coordinate communication between the CGTC campus and the local Emergency Management Agency and Public Health representatives for updates and briefings as to the effect of the pandemic at the local level
- coordinate the delivery of awareness training for staff, faculty and students on hand washing, cough etiquette and other necessary health-related issues
- make recommendations as to needed supplies and personal protective equipment
- develop non-pharmaceutical intervention protocols for skills courses that cannot be taught online. These protocols could include social distancing (maintaining 6 foot distance from others), the wearing of personal protective equipment, and other actions deemed necessary.
- purchase supplies such as hand sanitizer, thermometers, gloves and disposable N95 respirators.

STANDBY

President

- continue to communicate with Technical College System of Georgia to determine the overall plan
- outline the plans for continuing operations should the local Emergency Management and Public Health institute social distancing mandates
- assign staff to provide a daily report of absenteeism

- determine the “trigger point” (the percentage of student/staff absenteeism beyond which the continuation of operations is no longer feasible) for discontinuing classes and closing the school

Leadership Team

- Cross train staff to continue workloads with possible 30 – 40% absenteeism
- Improve and expand the list of available substitute instructors
- Review and determine student rules and policies concerning absences, withdrawals and incompletes

Pandemic Coordinator

- continue to monitor news and official reports of the status of the spread and penetration of the disease affecting the local and state population and report internally to the President
- continue to coordinate communication between the CGTC campus and the local Emergency Management Agency and Public Health representatives for updates and briefings as to the effect of the pandemic at the local level
- report absentee “trigger” numbers to Public Health and solicit advice for continuing operations from the District Health Director
- refine recommendations as to needed supplies and personal protective equipment
- continue to develop non-pharmaceutical intervention protocols for staff for whom working at home is not an option. These protocols may include expansion of work stations to maintain a 6 foot distance between workers, wearing N95 respirators when workers must co-mingle, and other protocols as necessary.
- continue to develop non-pharmaceutical intervention protocols for skills courses that cannot be taught online. These protocols could include maintaining 6 foot distance from others, the wearing of personal protective equipment, and other actions deemed necessary.
- ensure these measures can be put in place quickly with minimal course disruption

ACTIVATION

President

- issue the order for activation of this plan in response to notification from public health officials; federal, state or local government officials; or the TCSG
- initiate “work from home” procedures for pre-determined staff depending on the category of pandemic (see “Activation Actions by Pandemic Severity Category”)
- initiate course continuation through Angel Learning depending on the category of pandemic (see “Activation Actions by Pandemic Severity Category”)
- alert TCSG of any public events which may have to be cancelled.
- prepare to close the campus if necessary

Leadership Team

- express to faculty and staff that the overarching goal of the College is to continue operations to the greatest extent possible while safeguarding the health of the staff and students
- have staff and students on standby for closing of campus
- carry out other actions as deemed necessary as they may relate to this activation.

Pandemic Coordinator

- assign a campus safety officer to ensure that all faculty, staff and students follow designated social distancing protocols while on campus
- establish an Emergency Operations Center in the Board Room. All key contacts will report.
- initiate protocols for non-pharmaceutical interventions depending on the category of pandemic (see “Activation Actions by Pandemic Severity Category”).
- continue to monitor absences and staff/student illness ratios
- in consultation with Public Health, determine whether the number of absences and staff/student illness ratios is radically out of proportion with other local statistics.
- alert the President when process can be started to phase back into normal operations

ACTIVATION ACTIONS BY PANDEMIC SEVERITY INDEX CATEGORY

All Categories

- Actively encourage cough etiquette and hand-washing
- Apply liberal sick leave policies to support the decision by individuals to isolate the sick
- Screen students, faculty and staff for illness and send the ill home

Category 1 (if a cluster of more than 15% of staff and/or students is ill)

- initiate protocols for non-pharmaceutical interventions
- initiate “work from home” procedures for pre-identified staff
- initiate course continuation through Angel Learning
- provide supplies for cough etiquette (e.g., tissues, hand sanitizers, masks)
- communicate with Public Health and Emergency Management to monitor the local illness status

Category 2 & 3 (if a cluster of more than 10% of staff and/or students is ill)

- suspend low priority activities
- provide supplies for cough etiquette and hand hygiene
- initiate protocols for non-pharmaceutical interventions
- initiate “work from home” for pre-identified staff
- initiate course continuation through Angel Learning
- encourage alternatives to handshaking
- support working from home or modified work schedules, especially if there are essential workers or vulnerable individuals in the household

- encourage custodial staff to aggressively wipe down handrails and door knobs/handles several times a day

Category 4 and 5 (if a cluster of more than 5% of staff and/or students is ill)

- modify workplace and work schedules to increase distance between people
- allow working from home for all staff when possible
- suspend non-essential activities
- initiate protocols for non-pharmaceutical interventions
- initiate course continuation through Angel Learning
- in consultation with public health and community leaders, prepare to close the campus upon application of community-wide social distancing protocols
- actively encourage cough etiquette and hand hygiene, and the restriction of physical contact

KEY CONTACTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Title	Responsibility
President	-Plan activation -Communicate with Commissioner, Board of Directors
Director of Campus Safety and Security as Pandemic Coordinator - Chair	-Communicate with state agencies and local officials -Coordinate all pandemic related issues
Pandemic Coordinator – Vice chair	-Coordinate with chair on all pandemic related issues
Public Relations and Information	-Public/media notification -Communicate with Foundation Trustees
Vice President, Academic Affairs	-Coordinate instructional program activities for credit and adult education programs
Vice President , Administrative Services	-Funding and Finance -Communicate with bookstore, vending operations, shipping and receiving, mail
Vice President, Economic Development	-Coordinate activities for economic development and continuing education classes
Vice President, IE and Facilities	-Communicate with state agencies -Communicate with food service staff
Vice President, Information Technology	-Coordinate activities of IT department
Vice President, Satellite Operations	-Coordinate instructional program activities for off campus credit programs

Vice President, Student Affairs	-Coordinate student affairs
Facilities Director	-Oversight of facilities -Notify contractors with on-campus projects
Facility Support Supervisor	-Custodial operations -Buildings open and close (Macon Campus)
Maintenance Supervisor	-Maintenance operations
Department Chair, Health Science	-Medical Operations