

H1N1 Influenza 09 Pandemic

Update to State Sporting Associations
June 2009



Department of
Sport and Recreation

Building stronger, healthier, happier and safer communities.

H1N1 Influenza 09 Pandemic

- ***A human influenza pandemic, due to an influenza virus strain to which humans have little immunity, is considered inevitable and overdue***
- The pandemic virus has arrived in Australia, and has become widespread in Victoria



Influenza Pandemic

- WA cannot ignore the issue
- The virus originated in Mexico with many cases reported across North America. While cases have been reported throughout the world, Australia, the United Kingdom, Canada, Japan and Spain show signs of higher numbers than the rest of the world
- The WHO has raised the threat level of a pandemic (worldwide outbreak) to Phase 5. This means a pandemic is possible but not inevitable.



Phases

- Australia is at the **Contain Phase** - That is, the virus has arrived in Australia causing small number of cases and/or small number of clusters.
- Victoria has moved into the **Sustain Phase** – Pandemic virus is established in Australia and spreading to the community
- Impact on Australia will and is varied depending on virulence, transmissibility and interventions. Press has reported that up to 1 in 4 Australians may get the virus.
- Impact on WA – could be substantial



1. ALERT	<p>A novel virus with pandemic potential causes severe disease in humans who have had contact with infected animals.</p> <p>Novel virus has not arrived in Australia.</p>
2. DELAY	<p>Novel virus has not arrived in Australia.</p> <p>OS4 Small cluster of cases in one country overseas.</p> <p>OS5 Large cluster(s) of cases in only one or two countries overseas.</p> <p>OS6 Large cluster(s) of cases in more than two countries overseas.</p>
3. CONTAIN	<p>Pandemic virus has arrived in Australia causing small number of cases and/or small number of clusters.</p>
4. SUSTAIN (FULL ALERT)	<p>Pandemic virus is established in Australia and spreading in the community.</p>
5. CONTROL	<p>Customised pandemic vaccine widely available and is beginning to bring the pandemic under control.</p>
6. RECOVER	<p>Pandemic controlled in Australia but further waves may occur</p>



Government Actions

6 phases

- The Contain phase – this brings into play a variety of measures which includes not just medical interventions.

Community Based Social Distancing Measures

Community-based containment measures aim to reduce the number of opportunities for exposure to and transmission of the influenza virus. Decisions on which social distancing measures will be instituted will be guided by the severity of the pandemic, its impact on specific subpopulations, the expected benefit of the intervention(s) and the likely impact on critical infrastructure, health services and society.



Social Distancing

One of the cardinal rules for decreasing transmission is in maintaining at least **1 metre distance** between people at work, in the community, on public transport, and in school settings. Other community-based social distancing measures designed to reduce social density and contact between infected and non-infected individuals may include:

- Closure of childcare facilities and schools
- Decreasing the number of social contacts in the workplace
- Reducing density of travellers on public transport
- Modifying supermarket and other retail opening hours
- Modifying, postponing, or cancelling selected public gatherings, including sporting events,
- Concerts and going to the cinema



The impact

It is a **strategic issue/risk**

There is a **business responsibility**. Key aspects include:

- Protection of staff and customers
- Responsibility to key stakeholders such as shareholders and investors (sponsors)
- Succession planning
- Development of a pandemic outbreak plan



Possible Impact Areas for Sport

Needs to be planned for/treated –
Risk Management process

Items/risks that could be considered include:

- Impact on fixtures (travel restrictions)
- Financial impact of no gate takings, cost escalation associated with alternatives, player maintenance
- Impact on contractual arrangements with media, stadia etc.
- People welfare (vaccinations etc)



Treatments

Some **treatments** may include:

- Prioritise your organisations critical functions
- Insurance
- Identify functions that could be suspended
- Plan for alternative work schedules
- Explore telecommuting capabilities



Treatments

- Identify staff needs – training, information, support etc.
- Develop a succession plan for key management in case some are lost
- Provide specific education to staff and families re the issue
- Consider the purchase/supply of gloves, masks, antiseptic wipes for employees



Influenza Pandemic

- The issue is real and requires some strategic and operational consideration



Q and A

Q: Why should we worry when the effects of catching the virus don't seem severe?

A: Even a pandemic virus that initially causes mild symptoms in otherwise healthy people can be disruptive, especially under the conditions of today's highly mobile and closely interdependent societies. Moreover, the same virus that causes mild illness in one country can result in much higher morbidity and mortality in another. In addition, the inherent virulence of the virus can change over time as the pandemic goes through subsequent waves of national and international spread.



Q and A

Q: Have any social distancing measures officially been put into place?

A: States and Territories will apply a policy of voluntary exclusion from school for a period of seven days for all children returning from areas where there is a high prevalence of the virus circulating in the community.



Practical Measures

- Reinforce club policies and practices on hygiene (e.g. sharing of water bottles)
- Are there any policies/guidelines in place if clubs can't compete due to high numbers of players with the virus?
- What are your obligations?
 - To your teams/players/opposition/sponsors etc.



More Information

Western Australia Health Department

www.health.wa.gov.au/disaster/pandemic_influenza/index.cfm

Department of Health and Ageing

www.health.gov.au

World Health Organisation

www.who.int

Department of Education and Training

<http://www.det.wa.edu.au/swineflu/detcms/portal/>



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