



Pandemic Flu Education Campaign Messages – for Civic/Community Leaders

Your neighborhood just go a lot larger.

Pandemic flu is a real threat, but there are specific, simple steps you can take to encourage your neighbors and your near-and-dear to prepare. As a trusted leader in your community, you are key in helping to encourage people to prepare now for a flu pandemic.

If people hear similar information from multiple trusted leaders, they will be more likely to take action now to get themselves and their families ready for an extreme emergency like pandemic flu.

Key Points:

1. The threat of a flu pandemic is real. Preparing now will make a difference to your community.

- ✓ CDC and other leading public health experts say that the threat of a pandemic is real – not a question of *if*, but *when*.
- ✓ Experts are concerned that the current H5N1 (bird flu) virus is changing, and could cause a human influenza pandemic.
- ✓ A flu pandemic could spread quickly and be catastrophic. There may be little time to get ready once it happens.
- ✓ The U.S. was overwhelmed by the 1918-1919 pandemic flu, which caused the deaths of at least 675,000 Americans. If a pandemic of similar severity occurred today, 90 million Americans could become ill, and nearly 2 million Americans may die.
- ✓ In Vermont, 28,842 cases of pandemic influenza (“la grippe”) were reported during the month of October 1918.
- ✓ Preparing now for a pandemic could slow the spread of illness and avert failed businesses, lost jobs, decrease numbers of people sick, decrease number of deaths during a pandemic.

2. You have a unique and powerful role to play in your community.

- ✓ Government alone can’t prepare the nation for a pandemic. This challenge requires leadership - from those most trusted and respected in their communities.
- ✓ As a community leader, you are in a unique position to inform the members of your community about how to engage in local preparedness activities.

- ✓ While no one can prevent a pandemic from happening, government, communities, and individuals need to work together to prepare the state and the nation for a flu pandemic to help minimize its impact.
- ✓ If you help members of your community take steps now to prepare, they will be better able to withstand the impact of a pandemic and help contain the spread of illness to others.

3. Government leaders, in partnership with national and state organizations, are supporting your efforts to help your community prepare for a pandemic.

- ✓ There are resources and tools you can use to inform your community members and answer questions about pandemic flu.
- ✓ Look to healthvermont.gov for ideas and tools from other local, state and national organizations to help you encourage your community to get prepared.

4. There are specific ways you can help your community prepare.

- ✓ Share information.
- ✓ Ask your community members and neighbors to prepare.
- ✓ Host events.
- ✓ Communicate within your community that it is critical for everyone to prepare for a pandemic.
- ✓ Use the tools and ideas provided to help reach your audience, and share the key messages on preparedness:
 - Stay informed and make a plan.
 - Stock up to stay home.
 - Stop germs from spreading.

Information & Resources:

National – www.pandemicflu.gov

Vermont – www.healthvermont.gov