



## **Pandemic Flu Education Campaign Messages – for Faith Leaders**

### **It's Not Just a Matter of Faith.**

Your leadership is essential to encourage people to prepare now for a flu pandemic. We ask you to use the information and resources provided at [healthvermont.gov](http://healthvermont.gov) to encourage your own community and congregation to take simple actions now to prepare for pandemic influenza.

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 and congregation.**

- ✓ CDC and other leading public health experts say that 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 occurs.
- ✓ 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 October 1918.
- ✓ Preparing now for a pandemic could prevent sickness and deaths during a pandemic.

#### **2. Your congregation and community look to you as a leader in pandemic preparedness.**

- ✓ 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 faith leader, you can lead by example to encourage your community to prepare themselves and help others in need.

- ✓ 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.

**3. Government and national faith leaders support your leadership in helping individuals and families prepare for a pandemic.**

- ✓ There are resources both for you to use, and to use to inform your congregation and community about pandemic flu.
- ✓ Look to [healthvermont.gov](http://healthvermont.gov) to find ideas and tools from other local, state and national organizations to help you encourage your congregation to get prepared.

**4. There are specific ways you can help your congregation prepare.**

- ✓ Share information – by e-mail, sermons or talks, bulletin and newsletter articles, with posters, flyers, workshops, discussion groups, events.
- ✓ ASK your congregation to get ready themselves, and help others in need.
- ✓ Host activities: workshops, presentations, food & supplies drive.
- ✓ Use the tools and ideas provided through the Take the Lead campaign to communicate within your congregation and community and spread the key messages: Stay informed and make a plan. Stock up to stay home. Stop germs from spreading.

**Information & Resources:**

National – [www.pandemicflu.gov](http://www.pandemicflu.gov)

Vermont – [www.healthvermont.gov](http://www.healthvermont.gov)