



Pandemic Flu Education Campaign Messages – for Health Care Leaders

The Right Prescription is Preparedness.

Pandemic flu is a real threat. As a trusted health leader, you are key in helping to encourage people to prepare now for a flu pandemic. We ask you to take a few moments with your patients to reinforce the importance of preparing now.

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 patients.

- ✓ CDC and other leading public health experts say that the threat of a pandemic is real – not a question of *if*, but *when*.
- ✓ Public health 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 prevent sickness and death during a pandemic.

2. Your patients look to you as an expert on the potential impact of pandemic and how to prepare now.

- ✓ Your position gives you a unique, powerful role to play in your practice, hospital or health care facility – and among the patients you treat.
- ✓ Government alone can’t prepare the nation for a pandemic. This challenge requires leadership – from those most trusted and respected in their communities.

- ✓ 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.
- ✓ You can help patients understand their risk, discuss how they can protect themselves and their loved ones, and respond to their questions with information on the risks of influenza, symptoms and how to treat it.
- ✓ If you validate your patients' questions and concerns and encourage them to prepare, they will be better able to withstand the impact of a pandemic and help contain the spread of illness to others.
- ✓ As their health care provider, you are in a unique position to educate your patients about the treat of pandemic and its health effects.

3. Centers for Disease Control & Prevention (CDC) and Health & Human Services (HHS) support your leadership in helping your patients prepare for a pandemic.

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

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

- ✓ Display in-office materials.
- ✓ Provide answers to your patients.
- ✓ Use the tools and ideas provided through the Take the Lead campaign to communicate with your patients 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

Vermont – www.healthvermont.gov