

2/4/2020

Pandemic

Procedures for the Kent District Library

Background:

The following background information is provided in order to explain the conditions for a pandemic as well as what might occur and provide for an initial discussion of preparedness recognizing the sudden nature of a pandemic and the strain it can place on our workforce.

A pandemic may occur when three conditions have been met:

1. a new influenza virus subtype emerges;
2. it infects humans causing serious illness; and
3. it spreads easily and sustainably among humans.

The Corona virus meets all three of these conditions. Although the majority of the outbreak is limited to China, a few cases have been detected in the United States.

The World Health Organization (WHO) has defined phases for tracking a potential pandemic:

- Inter-pandemic phase -- New virus in animals, no human cases
 - Low risk of human cases
 - Higher risk of human cases
- Pandemic alert -- New Virus causes human cases. No or very limited human-to-human transmission
 - Evidence of increased human-to-human transmission
 - Evidence of significant human-to-human transmission
- Pandemic
 - Efficient and sustained human-to-human transmission

At present the Center for Disease Control (CDC) recognizes that the Corona Virus (2019-nCov) is highly contagious, and has been detected in the United States, however, is not spreading as rapidly as in China.

Symptoms of 2019-nCoV include:

- Fever
- Cough
- Shortness of breath

Preventative Steps

The CDC shares that there are simple preventative actions that can be taken, including:

- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. Use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol if soap and water are not available.

If KDL Staff are Sick with Flu-like Symptoms

- Stay home. If a lack of available leave time is preventing you from staying home, contact HR and we will facilitate additional leave time so that you can remain home and avoid spreading the flu.
- Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue and then immediately throw it in the trash.
- Clean and disinfect work surfaces and frequently touched objects daily.

If a Staff Member from your KDL Location Has Flu-like Symptoms

Masks are recommended for use by members of staff, up to the point where consideration might need to be given to closing. Since person-to-person contact and airborne pathogens are thought to be the major modes of contracting the flu, there will be a concern for touching objects and or breathing in common space, especially where sneezing or coughing may occur. Customers will be invited to wear masks. It will be hard to distinguish a common cold from the more dangerous flu. It will be prudent to treat potential dangers seriously and focus on what might be the worst case. Masks (enough for staff and additional ones for customers with illness) should be procured in the event of a pandemic.

Using disinfecting cleaners on common work surfaces will be helpful in killing germs. This is especially important for items that are shared or commonly touched by multiple people, such as phones, computer keyboards and door handles. Staff in all areas will be called upon to assist in this process by using disposable cleaning gloves and disinfecting wipes or cleanser to clean surfaces.

More information will be needed involving the handling of materials being returned. As a measure of comfort, masks and disposable cleaning gloves should be issued to persons working with the return bins and incoming bags in all locations. Some of these measures may be more psychological than physical. However, it would be best to error on the side of caution. This will help provide reassurance during a crisis.

Pamphlets produced by local, state and national health and safety agencies should be distributed. If a pamphlet cannot be located that is in print (the health department may have these), then the staff should develop one. The information for this can be taken from the National Center for Disease Control (CDC) and the US Health and Human Services Department.

School Closings and What This Would Mean to The Public Library:

Close proximity among population groups is a key factor in helping spread the flu virus. Schools have traditionally been a key location for this to occur. During a pandemic the community can expect schools to be among the first buildings to close. Since these closings may be uncoordinated, the library should plan for the closing of schools to be erratic. The closing of schools as well as childcare centers may impact who will be visiting the library.

Parents Seeking Childcare, Potential for Increased Burden on Public Libraries.

Parents suddenly thrust into an immediate need for childcare may turn to libraries. While never an acceptable alternative for child care, KDL staff need to be ready to address this issue.

Potential Staff Issues:

When establishing potential jobs that may be done from home, consideration may be given to staff with childcare or caregiving needs. Staff with aging parents or other family members with medical needs in

their care may need to make alternate arrangements.

Vaccine and/or Antiviral Costs

If a vaccine becomes available, the library may explore offering the vaccine to all staff and dependents.

Supplies for Personnel

The library will purchase the approved facemasks and have these on hand. In addition, disinfecting cleaners, gloves for protection, as well as disinfecting wipes or cleanser should be available. Instructions for how to maintain a sterile area or field should be discussed. Staff sharing common phones and or equipment will be instructed in how to keep these clean and disinfected before use and between uses.

Closing Library Facilities

Decisions to modify hours of operation or closure of library facilities will be made by the KDL Executive Director and communicated through the normal procedure for closures. Branch managers who feel there is a unique situation for their location should confer with the Director of Branch Services or the Executive Director. If closure is deemed necessary during a pandemic, it's most likely that all KDL operations will be closed.

Tasks That May Be Performed During Closings:

Some possibilities:

- Inventory of collections
- Review of collections to determine any acquisition deficiencies
- Shift any collections that may have been placed on hold
- Training opportunities for staff on software, databases and/or materials and services
- Update files
- Insure input of any new collection material
- Proactively repair materials during this time
- Building upkeep (cleaning projects and repairs)
- Review and update policies, procedures and manuals
- Write material reviews and recommendations

Working Under Controlled Circumstances:

- Mailing materials from the library.
- Promotion of the e-Resource collection to patrons without leaving their homes.
- Continuing phone reference from various locations perhaps increasing the number of incoming lines and diverting personnel to staff this service.

- Some collection maintenance may also be possible during a period where buildings are closed. The tasks that were identified during the period of the move might serve as a helpful template (see the abbreviated list above).
- Suspend due dates and hold expiration dates for all circulating materials until an all clear has been issued by the Library.
- Meetings should be conducted over the phones vs. in person. These should include one on one plus conference calling for larger meetings.