

2020

COVID-19 Plan – Required Information for all Employees



Imagine Support  
Services, LLC

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# INTRODUCTION

## Introduction

### BACKGROUND

The original COOP Pandemic Plan for Imagine Support Services, LLC (ISS) was written in 2010. This plan was reviewed by DES/DDD prior to ISS becoming a qualified vendor. The plan has been reviewed annually since then. During the 2017 flu season, the Pandemic Plan received a major update that was necessitated by the new information that came to light concerning illness/absenteeism rates. The plan is now undergoing another major revision to incorporate lessons learned from the COVID-19 Pandemic. This sub-plan is born out of that revision in order to inform direct care workers (DCWs) as to new policies, procedures, and methods of remaining healthy while working.

### HIGHLIGHT

Imagine Support Services, LLC (ISS) provides services and performs functions that may be impacted by a natural or man-made disaster. ISS's continuity of operations plan (COOP) outlines how ISS plans to maintain essential functions and services during a disaster.

Unlike other hazards, an influenza pandemic will not directly impact the physical infrastructure of ISS. A pandemic threatens human resources by removing essential personnel from the workplace for extended periods of time. Accordingly, ISS's COOP must be supplemented to achieve a pandemic capability.

Plans for maintaining essential functions and services during a pandemic must emphasize and implement procedures such as social distancing techniques, infection control, personal hygiene, and cross training. Protecting the health and safety of employees and clients must be the focus of planning in order to ensure the continuity of essential operations.

### MANDATE

AHCCCS and DDD have mandated that each agency provide training to all employees on the agencies' Pandemic Performance Plan. This document fulfills this requirement.

### PURPOSE

1. This plan is meant to ensure the health and safety of both employees and clients.
2. This plan is meant to make it possible to maintain operations during an influenza pandemic.
3. This plan is meant to help ensure compliance with RFQVA 710000 and any other state/federal requirements.

This plan neither replaces nor supersedes the overall COOP, but rather this plan supplements the COOP.

### OBJECTIVES

ISS's objectives during the COVID-19 pandemic are as follows:

# INTRODUCTION

1. Prevent and reduce the transmission of the virus among employees, clients, and partners.
2. Minimize illness among employees and clients.
3. Maintain mission critical operations.
4. Minimize social disruption and the economic impact of an influenza pandemic.
5. Aid the community at large where possible.

## ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

### **Agency**

- Maintain continuity plans.
- Provide resources for training.
- Ensure communication systems are working.
- Develop guidance to protect sensitive information.
- Acquire and store necessary supplies.
- Allocate and distribute necessary supplies in an effective and timely manner during an emergency.

### **Administrators**

- Plan for short-term and long-term disruptions.
- Stay in constant contact with employees, clients, and leadership.
- Know where to find information and help with human resource issues.

### **Direct Care Workers**

- Follow guidelines set by the CDC and AZ DHS
- Be ready for alternative work assignments.
- Protect sensitive information.
- Stay in constant contact with clients and management.
- Have a personal plan to deal with emergencies.

# PANDEMIC INFLUENZA OVERVIEW/IMPLICATIONS

## Pandemic Influenza Overview/Implications

### SEASONAL (COMMON) FLU

The common flu is a respiratory illness that can be transmitted person to person. Most people have some immunity and a vaccine is typically available to mitigate the flu. Seasonal pandemics cause an average of 36,000 deaths in the United States each year. An estimated 80,000 deaths occurred in the U.S. due to flu during the 2017 – 2018 flu season according to the Centers for Disease Control (CDC).

### AVIAN (BIRD) FLU

Avian flu is caused by a virus that occurs naturally among wild birds. Low pathogenic avian flu is common in birds and causes few problems in humans. H5N1 is a highly pathogenic virus and is deadly to domestic fowl. H5N1 can be transmitted from birds to humans. There is no human immunity and no vaccine is available.

### PANDEMIC FLU

Virulent flu that causes a global outbreak of serious illness is pandemic. Because there is little or no natural immunity, the disease may spread easily from person to person, causing high levels of sickness and death around the world. When a pandemic strikes, it takes months to develop a new vaccine.

#### DEATHS WORLDWIDE FROM SEVERAL NOTABLE PANDEMICS IN THE LAST CENTURY

DESCRIPTION	ORIGIN	YEAR	DEATHS (ESTIMATE)	UNITS
<b>Spanish Flu</b>	Europe	1918	40 – 50	Million
<b>Asian Flu</b>	China	1957	2	Million
<b>Hong Kong Flu</b>	China	1968	1	Million
<b>H1N1</b>	Mexico & S.W. United States	2009 - 2010	152 – 576	Thousand
<b>Ebola</b>	Western Africa	2014 - 2016	11+	Thousand
<b>COVID-19</b>	China	2019 - 2020	Still counting	

#### POTENTIAL IMPACT OF AN INFLUENZA PANDEMIC ON THE UNITED STATES\*

PERSONS INFECTED	OUTPATIENT VISITS	HOSPITALIZATIONS	DEATHS
100 Million	45 Million	1 – 10 Million	200,000 – 1.9 Million

\*Source: FluAid Software, CDC

# DIRECT CARE WORKER RESPONSIBILITIES

## Direct Care Worker Responsibilities

### AVOID BEING EXPOSED OR EXPOSING OTHERS

The following precautions should be adopted in order to avoid exposure to COVID-19:

- Stay at home when you are sick.
- Wash your hands often. Use soap and water, washing for a minimum of 20 seconds. If you use a hand sanitizer, make sure that it is alcohol based and contains a minimum of 60% alcohol.
- Cover your cough or sneeze. Use a tissue when possible.
- Clean/disinfect frequently touched surfaces. A 1% bleach solution will work well.
- Avoid touching your face.
- Cloth face coverings like a mask or bandana, may help contain the spread of the virus.
- Practice social distancing of at least six feet whenever possible.
- Avoid settings where more than ten people gather or when social distancing is difficult, especially if you are in a high risk group. High risk groups are defined as those over the age of 65 or people of any age that have serious underlying medical conditions.
- If you are exposed to someone that has or is suspected of having COVID-19, alert the office and self-quarantine. Get tested for the virus. You are not to go to work where you may expose clients or their families.

### SYMPTOMS AND SEVERITY

Illness can be severe and require hospitalization, but most individuals recover by resting, drinking plenty of liquids, and taking pain and fever-reducing medications. These symptoms may appear 2–14 days after exposure and can include:

- Fever
- Cough
- Shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
- Chills
- Muscle pain
- Headache
- Sore throat
- New loss of taste or smell
- Other less common symptoms include gastrointestinal symptoms like nausea, vomiting, or diarrhea.

**If you develop emergency warning signs for COVID-19, get medical attention immediately.**

Emergency warning signs include:

# DIRECT CARE WORKER RESPONSIBILITIES

- Difficulty getting enough air
- Chest pain
- Change in alertness or responsiveness
- Bluish lips or face
- Rapid breathing

These symptoms lists are not all inclusive. Please consult your medical provider for any other symptoms that are severe or concerning.

## PROTECT SENSITIVE INFORMATION

The work that we do is covered by HIPAA. We must remain vigilant and ensure that we follow the HIPAA guidelines and protect the sensitive medical information of our clients.

## STAY IN CONTACT

When changes or questions arise, be sure to communicate with the office. Some of the things that must be tracked during this pandemic are:

- When ever there is a change in services or schedule due to COVID-19 or precautions being taken due to COVID-19. This includes if a direct care worker is no longer comfortable providing services or if the client or client family is no longer comfortable having a direct care worker come to their home.
- When service locations are changed due to COVID-19. For example, if habilitation that was performed in the community is no longer being performed in the community.
- If someone in your home or your client's home is possibly exposed to COVID-19. Certain precautions must be taken and notifications may need to be made.

ISS must track all COVID-19 related data. Some of the data is reported in aggregate to DDD in the form of surveys. DDD uses this information to decide what rules and/or procedures must be modified and to set funding levels such as the COVID incentives that are currently being paid to direct care workers for continuing to provide services during the pandemic. Some of the data is used to justify payments to direct care workers that are out of work because of the COVID-19 pandemic. All of the data will be used to update ISS's Pandemic Plan and Pandemic Recovery Plan.

## ALTERNATIVE WORK ASSIGNMENTS

If the client or clients that you are working with decide not to utilize services during the pandemic, there may be other clients that you can work with temporarily. Also, because schools and day programs have been closed down, many of our clients have an increased need for our services or have shifted their schedules. By being flexible, we are better able to serve our clients and may see an increase in available hours.

# DIRECT CARE WORKER RESPONSIBILITIES

## PERSONAL EMERGENCY PLAN

Each of us need to have a plan for how we as an individual are going to safeguard our own health and the health of our families. Our plan should also take into consideration what we have learned from the pandemic so far. It is possible that we will see increased infection rates return in the fall when the weather turns cooler. Will we see toilet paper become scarce again? Cleaning supplies? While there is no need to hoard these items, having a little extra just seems like a good investment.

## SOURCES OF INFORMATION

Below are several sources of good information:

Arizona Division of Developmental Disabilities

<https://des.az.gov/services/disabilities/developmental-disabilities/vendors-providers/actions-related-to-covid-19>

Arizona Department of Health Services

<https://azdhs.gov/preparedness/epidemiology-disease-control/infectious-disease-epidemiology/index.php#novel-coronavirus-home>

Centers for Disease Control (CDC)

<https://www.coronavirus.gov/>

Imagine Support Services

<http://www.isscare.org/COVID-19/index.html>



# RECENT CHANGES

## Recent Changes

### TRAINING

During the height of the pandemic, nearly all in-person training was prohibited. Currently, we are beginning to offer in-person training once again in a greatly reduced fashion. We are limiting our class sizes for in-person training to three students at a time. We are also still offering many of our classes via Zoom or on the Internet. Agencies were granted extensions on many of the certifications that were expiring. It is unclear if those extensions will continue beyond the initial 90 days already granted. This is a fluid situation and updates are posted to the web site regularly. We now have our training schedule on the web site in a form that allows you to sign up for training classes (<http://www.isscare.org/Careers/training.html>).

### INCREASED SERVICE LEVELS

Where assessed by DDD support coordinators, additional respite has been granted, up to a maximum of 720 hours (fiscal year of 10/01/2019 – 09/30/2020). There is no indication that additional respite will be granted after the current fiscal year. Additionally, increased habilitation has been assessed for some clients due to being out of school or day programs. In many cases, attendant care has been assessed for the same reasons.

### PARENT PROVIDERS

DDD has allowed, temporarily, for parents of children under the age of 18 to become paid providers. The parents must meet all the training and certification requirements that a regular provider would need. These parents will be laid off as soon as the crisis is declared over.

### COVID WAGES

ISS applied for and was granted monies under the Paycheck Protection Plan. The bulk of these monies are being spent to keep direct care workers on the payroll while they are temporarily out of work due to the COVID-19 crisis. COVID wages are now drawing to close as this program expires.

### COVID INCENTIVE

DDD has increased rates for direct care services provided during the COVID-19 crisis. The increased rates have translated in to a \$4/hour salary increase paid in the form of a bonus for direct care services. This increase was initially paid for work performed between April 16 and May 31. The rates have been extended until July 31st.

# WHAT TO EXPECT MOVING FORWARD

## What to Expect Moving Forward

### EVER CHANGING ADVISE

The COVID-19 virus is something new and as such is not well understood by the medical professionals who treat it or the elected officials and bureaucrats that put forth the rules that we must follow. The advice that we receive has changed continuously and will continue to do so. We each need to stay informed and to use common sense.

The Executive Order that closed down much of the Arizona economy has expired and society is slowly opening back up. The experts, for the most part, feel that the danger posed by COVID-19 will subside to a lower level during the summer months. This is based in large part on past experience with the flu virus. Many feel that a second wave of COVID-19 is possible or even likely in the fall. If we do experience a second wave, we may see some or all of the restrictions re-imposed.

That being said, we all need to pay attention to the expiration dates of our certifications. We may have a limited window of opportunity to re-certify for Article 9 or CPR/First Aid. The training schedule is now on the web site and you may schedule classes through the web site.

<http://www.isscare.org/resources/index.html>

### AGENCY ACTIONS

The administration will do everything it can to keep up with the changing regulatory environment as well as watch for possible trends in available protections from the COVID-19 virus. We have already begun to prepare for the possibility of a second wave of the pandemic.

- A cloth mask manufacturer has been identified and a relationship has been established. Paper masks have been acquired.
- Multiple sellers of gloves have been identified and gloves are being stockpiled as they become available.
- A study is underway to diversify banking activities so that we are not reliant on only one institution for our banking needs or to take advantage of any future government programs.
- ISS continues to look at alternative methods to deliver training and certifications. This includes work on the web site to both deliver and schedule training.
- ISS has contracted with an on-line training organization to offer continuing education credits.
- A brief survey has been developed to gather useful information and lessons learned from our direct care providers, our clients, and their families. This information will be used to update our policies and better prepare for any future situations. This survey will also serve as proof that you have reviewed this document in order to satisfy DDD requirements.

# PLAN ACTIVATION & DEACTIVATION

## Plan Activation & Deactivation

### PLAN ACTIVATION

The Incident Manager, designee or successor, activates this plan. The decision will be made in consultation with key individuals. Activation triggers include the following:

1. Influenza, or some other illness, becomes prevalent in our geographical area and threatens to have a large negative impact on our ability to provide consistent services.
2. Critical infrastructure is threatened in a way that would have a severe impact on our ability to provide consistent services.
3. A declaration of emergency covering our geographical area is made by a local, county, state, or federal government agency.

### PLAN DEACTIVATION

The Incident Manager, designee or successor, deactivates the plan once the emergency has passed. The decision will be made in consultation with key individuals. Triggers for deactivation include the following:

1. The threat of negative impacts is deemed to have passed.
2. Business has been restored to pre-emergency conditions.
3. The government agency that declared the original emergency stands down from emergency operations.

## Pandemic Policies

### INFECTION CONTROL

Safeguarding the health of employees, clients, partners, vendors, and the public is a key objective. A variety of infection control measures will be utilized to minimize the spread of the virus.

#### Hygiene

Employees will be trained and reminded of basic hygiene measures that will help limit the chance of getting ill. These include:

- The use of respiratory etiquette (e.g. covering a cough or sneeze with a tissue; sneeze into the elbow when a tissue is not available).
- Avoid touching your nose, mouth, and eyes.
- Properly wash hands with soap and water or use hand sanitizer regularly. Always wash or disinfect after sneezing or coughing.
- Avoid direct skin contact with others (such as shaking hands).
- Wash hands after removing gloves.
- Whenever possible, do not handle other people's things (e.g. phones, pens, clothing, etc.).
- Keep work areas clean and disinfected.

#### Social Distancing

- Stay home when ill.
- Do not send children to school or day care.
- Avoid crowds and confined spaces.

#### Infection Control Supplies

Each direct care provider is encouraged to gather infection control supplies before there is a crisis. Once a crisis begins, it may become difficult or impossible to obtain the needed supplies.

- Soap
- Alcohol-based hand sanitizer (minimum 60% alcohol by content)
- Paper towels (disposable)
- Tissues
- Hand Wipes
- Garbage bags and trash cans for proper disposal
- Disinfectants
- Gloves (disposable)
- Latex Cleaning Gloves (washable)
- Surgical masks
- N95 masks

# PANDEMIC POLICIES

- Bleach – to make disinfectant for cleaning (1 part bleach to 100 parts water)
- Thermometers

## **Other Crisis Supplies**

Because the transportation industry will very likely be heavily impacted by mandatory travel restrictions during a severe influenza pandemic, one should consider other items that may need to be stocked. Without trucks moving goods to market, grocery stores will likely run out of items after only a few days (the average grocery store has about 2 ½ days of inventory on hand at any one time). People tend to panic buy during a crisis, so the window of opportunity to stock up once a crisis is recognized by the general public could be hours rather than days. The same issue should be considered in regard to commodities such as gasoline, medicines, and other medical supplies. ISS will not be able to help with these items during a crisis. Below are some suggested supplies to stockpile in the event that going to the store is not possible:

- Prescription Drugs
- Non-Prescription Drugs
  - Pain Relievers, Cold Medicines, Decongestants, Stomach Remedies, Anti-Diarrhea Medicines, Vitamins to Boost the Immune System
- Medical Supplies
- Electrolyte Drinks
- Food (two weeks per person)
- Water (one gallon per person per day)
- Items of special needs.
- Don't forget the needs of any pets.

## **Travel Policy**

During a pandemic event, one should avoid un-necessary travel whenever possible. If you must travel, report your travels to the administrative staff. The information will be used to ensure that you do not spread the virus if you have been to locations where the virus is or was prolific.

## **Communications**

Official communications concerning the agency must come through the administrative staff. Whenever dealing with the government or media outlets, it is important that our message is factual and consistent.

## Recovery From an Influenza Pandemic

Once a pandemic event has passed, ISS will need to evaluate several things:

- What was the actual demand for services? Did demand come in waves? If so, what was the driver?
- What was the actual absenteeism rate of our direct care providers? Did it come in waves? If so, what was the driver?
- Did we lose clients due to not having available direct care providers?
- Did we lose direct care providers due to not having available clients?
- Did we incur liability due to the way in which we operated during the crisis or the lack of preparedness prior to the crisis?
- Will the agency be paid for the services rendered during the crisis?
- What could we have done better? Are there other ways in which we could have prepared?
- Did ISS suffer losses of business? If so, what was the cause of the losses?
- Is ISS able to move forward with normal operations?
- Did ISS make any gains during the crisis? If so, are the gains sustainable during normal operations?

It is likely that ISS will learn from having been through a crisis such as an influenza pandemic. The things that we learn may be applicable to other types of crisis such as large storms, terrorism events, or economic downturns. It will be important to recognize where lessons learned can be put to productive use. ISS will make mistakes during a crisis, and ISS must be prepared to own up to those mistakes and ensure that they are not repeated.

It is quite certain that a severe crisis such as a pandemic would have a lasting impact on our business and the industry as a whole. Some agencies may not survive a severe or prolonged crisis. This potentially could mean more clients looking to ISS to provide services. New avenues of business may also be presented during a crisis. Crisis also brings new government policies and regulations to deal with as well as increased insurance rates. ISS must be able to quickly respond to the changed environment and resume normal operations (the new normal).

As part of the learning experience, ISS will solicit input from all interested parties to critique the handling of the crisis. We will need to hear from our clients, our employees, our vendors, and from DES/DDD. As other entities make adjustments, ISS will have to take those into account as well.

## Glossary

COOP – Continuity of Operations Plan

DDD - Department of Developmental Disability

DES – Division of Economic Security

HIPAA - Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act of 1996

ISS – Imagine Support Services, LLC

NPS – Non-Provision of Service

Endemic - (of a disease or condition) regularly found among particular people or in a certain area.

Pathogenic - (of a bacterium, virus, or other microorganism) causing disease

Epidemic - a widespread occurrence of an infectious disease in a community at a particular time