**Pandemic Preparedness for Faith-based Organizations**

**Instructor Guide: Section 1: Reducing Illness and Death from a Pandemic in Your Faith-based Organization (FBO)**

**Goals**
This section is designed to enable churches, synagogues, mosques and other places of worship to protect the health of their staff and the communities they serve by:

- Correctly describing pandemic-related terms
- Learning basic public health pandemic interventions

**Objectives**
By the end of this section, those taking the course will be able to:

- Identify pandemic and pandemic influenza terms
- Understand the differences between pandemic influenza and seasonal influenza
- List four public health interventions
- Identify basic ways their FBO can assist staff and members with those health interventions

**Section Strategy**
This section is an introduction so uses primarily a lecture format. PowerPoint slides complement the training methods and support the learning. At several points, you might allow time for questions and discussion.

**Section Duration**
This section is about 30 minutes, depending on the depth and breadth of the class discussions. Because of its brevity, it can be offered at the same time as Section 2.

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**Note to Instructor:** Add your name and title, as well as the date and location of the presentation, to this slide. Introduce yourself, your Extension affiliation (if applicable) and the Extension Disaster Education Network (EDEN). Welcome participants, and lead introductions.
Section 1
Reducing Illness and Death from a Pandemic in Your Faith-based Organization (FBO)

This Pandemic Preparedness for Faith-based Organizations course consists of three sections. This section provides the members of your faith-based organization (FBO) with skills to help reduce pandemic-related illness and death. The second section will help your FBO design a pandemic-preparedness plan, and the third section will help your FBO develop a strategy for assisting the community during and after a pandemic.

To properly prepare your FBO for a pandemic, it is essential to first cover the basics:
- What are pandemics?
- Where do they come from?
- What can we do to prevent them or reduce their effects?

There are many definitions of a pandemic, but they all have several points in common. A pandemic is an outbreak that:
- Is widespread geographically. (Epidemics usually are one geographic region.)
- Affects many, many people.
- Is infectious or contagious. (Cancer is widespread, but not a pandemic because it is not infectious.)
- Causes a high number of deaths.
- Causes major economic losses, social disruption and general hardship.

Throughout history, pandemics have killed millions of people from dozens of diseases. Many of these are now controlled by vaccinations (typhoid fever, cholera, tuberculosis, measles, etc.) or have been, for the most part, eradicated (smallpox).

HIV/AIDS began spreading around the world in about 1969. It already has killed millions of people, and there is still no cure or vaccination.

Dozens of influenza pandemics have occurred throughout history. This century has seen pandemics of Spanish flu in 1918-1920, Asian flu in 1957-58, Hong Kong flu in 1968-69 and H1N1 in 2009. These influenza outbreaks grew from epidemics to pandemics when they affected many nations on several continents.
Could Ebola or other diseases become pandemics? Possibly.

This program will concentrate primarily on influenza pandemics. However, most of the information is applicable to other pandemics as well.

A flu pandemic occurs when a new influenza A virus emerges for which there is little or no immunity in the human population. The virus causes serious illness and spreads easily from person to person worldwide.

There are three types of influenza viruses: A, B and C. Human influenza A and B viruses cause seasonal epidemics of disease almost every winter in the United States. Influenza type C infections cause a mild respiratory illness and are not thought to cause epidemics. However, the emergence of a new and very different influenza virus to infect people can cause an influenza pandemic.

Reference: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) http://www.cdc.gov/flu/about/viruses/types.htm

Pandemic flu is more severe than seasonal flu. However, many of the symptoms are the same. Pandemic flu is characterized by fever, headache, tiredness, cough, sore throat, runny or stuffy nose, body aches, diarrhea and vomiting. Fever can be unusually high, tiredness extreme and cough severe. Vomiting and diarrhea are more common in children than adults. In some individuals, pandemic flu can cause serious complications, including bacterial pneumonia, dehydration, sinus problems, ear infections and worsening of chronic medical conditions. These conditions include congestive heart failure, asthma and diabetes.

The flu spreads from person to person through tiny respiratory droplets when infected people cough or sneeze. People also may become infected by touching an object infected with influenza virus and then touching their mouth, nose or eyes.
Healthy adults may be able to infect others one day prior to showing symptoms and up to five days after getting sick. That means it is possible to give someone the flu before you know you are sick, as well as while you are sick.

Pandemic influenza spreads quickly. In 1918, the Spanish flu struck the United States and swept across the country in a very fast and devastating manner. An estimated 675,000 Americans died. These slides demonstrate the rate at which it spread across the U.S. nearly a century ago. This is startling, considering that transportation was in no way comparable to today’s standards. Compared to other pandemics that have occurred in the U.S., this one had a higher attack and fatality rate in previously healthy adults 20–50 years old.

Just before September 14, influenza showed up on the East Coast, primarily at Camp Devens near Boston and at Harvard University, and at Camp Funston in Kansas. The source was soldiers returning from the war zone in Europe, bringing the virus with them.

By September 21, cases were sporadic across the country. Soldiers and civilians riding the across the country on the railroad spread the influenza to new areas.

In just another week, cases had spread greatly, covering most of New England and other pockets of the U.S.
By early October, nearly every state had been impacted.

In just one month, pandemic influenza had engulfed the U.S. Everyone was affected in some way. Between September 15 and December 1, an estimated 300,000 to 350,000 people died in the United States. The pandemic continued into 1919, ultimately killing about 675,000 people in the U.S and 30-50 million people worldwide. It has been deemed the worst pandemic in American history.

Today’s society is far more mobile than in 1918. Mobility can lead to a faster spread of pandemic flu. People coughing or sneezing in a confined space easily spreads viruses. Pandemic flu could be one bus, boat, trolley, subway or airplane ride away. A virus on the East Coast can be on the West Coast in 4 hours. A virus in Europe can be in the United States in just 8 hours.

The 1918 Spanish flu pandemic killed more than 675,000 people in the United States and 30-50 million people worldwide. Imagine something like that happening today. The effects would be personally and economically devastating. Fortunately, today we are better able to stem that rapid spread by intervening at the personal and organizational levels.
There are four health interventions or actions for pandemics. They are:

- Staying home when you or someone in your household is sick. This is known as voluntary isolation or voluntary quarantine.
- Limiting physical contact with others. This is known as social distancing.
- Properly covering your coughs and sneezes.
- Washing your hands.

As faith-based leaders, during an influenza outbreak, you should encourage staff members, volunteers and worshipers to stay at home if they or someone in their household is ill or suspects illness. Staying home can reduce the spread of influenza-related illness within your faith-based organization and the communities your FBO serves. In addition, staying at home protects the health of your staff. Protecting your staff enables your FBO to continue performing its critical functions.

Encouraging people to stay home can be as easy as:

- Having one-on-one conversations with worshipers and staff about them staying home when they are sick
- Distributing fliers within the organization
- Putting “stay at home” information in bulletins and mass mailings.

In addition to conversation and materials, sick leave policies and procedures that don’t penalize people may need to be established to respond to the needs of staff, volunteers and other members who provide support for your faith-based organization.

Social distancing involves limiting direct contact with others. A person who has the flu and is standing within 3 to 6 feet from others, which is about two arm lengths away, is likely to spread the flu to two other people. So, if you must go out, limiting close contact with others is very important to reduce the spread of your flu.
Organizational leaders need to consider temporarily altering some activities to help reduce pandemic flu transmission by limiting physical contact through social distancing. We will discuss this in more detail in Section 2.

Covering your coughs and sneezes is one of the simplest and most effective ways to stem the spread of a virus. Remember that you are contagious a day before you show symptoms, so it is important to protect every cough or sneeze. The best protection is to cough or sneeze into a tissue. Throw the tissue away immediately then wash your hands. If a tissue isn’t handy, cough or sneeze into your upper sleeve.

The worst thing to do is not cover your mouth and nose at all. Water droplets from sneezing and coughing can travel 6 feet or more, directly affecting other people and landing on surfaces that others touch. As a last resort, cover your mouth and nose with your bare hands when you cough or sneeze. Immediately clean them with soap and water or hand sanitizer.

Good hand hygiene is probably the single most important behavior for reducing person-to-person spread of viruses. Frequent hand washing stops the spread of the influenza virus that will make you and others sick.

Your faith-based organization can help make this easy for staff and members by making soap and hand sanitizer available in a variety of locations. Remember kitchens, eating areas, meeting rooms, classrooms and other locations. Consider putting hand sanitizer in every room in your facility.
To summarize, pandemic preparedness is an important public health issue. In the past, pandemic influenza caused massive illnesses and deaths within the general population. We can protect ourselves, our loved ones, our communities and our organizations today by learning about pandemics and using pandemic interventions that prepare you and your faith-based organization to be healthy.