

Threat Assessment 11

Public Health Emergency/Pandemic Event

General Situation

Widespread public health emergencies, referred to as “pandemics”, occur when a disease, often a strain of influenza, emerges to which the population has little immunity. The 20th century saw three such pandemics, the most notable of which was the 1918 Spanish influenza pandemic that was responsible for 20-40 million deaths throughout the world.

Public health experts are always concerned about the risk of another pandemic where a disease spreads between and amongst species. When strains of animal disease interact with the common strains of human diseases, a mutation can occur, creating a disease capable of human-to-human transmission, initiating a pandemic. Depending on the nature of such a disease, between 25 to 35 percent of the population could become ill. This level of disease activity would disrupt all aspects of society and severely affect the economy.

Public Health Emergency – World Health Organization (WHO) Pandemic Phases

To ensure consistent planning efforts, federal, state and county public health agencies use the World Health Organization (WHO) pandemic phases as described below.

Interpandemic Period	General Definition
Phase 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No new influenza virus subtypes detected in humans. • May or may not be present in animals. • If present in animals, the risk of human infection is considered to be low.
Phase 2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No new influenza virus subtypes detected in humans. • A circulating animal virus subtype maybe detected in animals. • There may be a substantial risk of human disease.
Pandemic Alert Period	General Definition
Phase 3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Humans have been infected with a novel virus subtype but human-to-human transmission has not occurred or only in rare instances of close contact.
Phase 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Small cluster(s) of cases with limited human-to-human transmission are documented, but spread is highly localized. • Virus is not well adapted to humans.
Phase 5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Larger cluster(s) appear, but human-to-human spread is still localized, suggesting that the virus is becoming increasingly better adapted to humans, but may not yet be highly transmissible. • The risk of pandemic is now substantial.

Interpandemic Period	General Definition
Pandemic Period	General Definition
Phase 6	• Increased and sustained transmission is documented in the general population.
Post-Pandemic Period	General Definition
Phase 7	• Continuing public health actions, including communication with the public on issues such as when public gatherings can resume and continued monitoring of possible outbreaks of infection, etc.

The Los Angeles County Department of Public Health (LACDPH) is the lead department for the county's response. LACDPH will work closely with local jurisdictions to ensure that:

- planning efforts are consistent throughout the county;
- official information will be provided to the jurisdictions in a timely manner;
- pharmaceutical distribution planning, training and exercising is conducted; and
- the organization is SEMS/NIMS (Standardized Emergency Management System/National Incident Management System) compliant.

Specific Situation

In highly urbanized and densely populated Los Angeles County, quarantine and isolation practices would not be enforceable or practical. The City will work in conjunction with county, state and federal agencies to aggressively promote basic sanitation and hygiene public education programs. The City will, at the direction of the Public Health Officer for Los Angeles County, implement the procedures and protocols as outlined in the **Public Health Emergency Annex to this plan.**

Emergency Response Actions

Emergency response actions applicable to all hazards are included in **Part Two Annexes, Checklist Actions for each Section.**

Reference: County of Los Angeles Department of Public Health, All-Hazards Emergency Management Plan, Annex 11, Operational Plan for Implementation and Enforcement of Isolation and Quarantine Measures