

ROLE OF COMMUNITY LEADERS

HOW TO PREPARE FOR PANDEMIC INFLUENZA: ESSENTIAL ACTIONS FOR COMMUNITY LEADERS TO CONSIDER

1: Establish a local task force to plan and coordinate preparedness activities.

Identify organizations in your area (district, municipality, community) to help develop a plan for pandemic preparedness. These organizations can include local departments of health, education and information; local businesses; local disaster management groups (or Red Cross groups); police and other civic organizations; faith-based organizations; schools; and media outlets.

Meet with these community, civic, and faith leaders to advocate for the importance of preparing for a pandemic and engaging their support. Provide them with key messages to distribute and appropriate contacts and sources of information in the case of a pandemic outbreak. Support the mobilization of community groups to begin pandemic preparedness together.

2: Develop local preparedness plans.

Obtain any existing local pandemic preparedness plans and determine whether they should be updated. Obtain national preparedness plans and see if there are recommendations for what districts and communities should be doing to prepare. The plan should outline the roles of local partners and address how to prepare pre-pandemic and how to rapidly respond during an outbreak in the following areas:

- Community health care
- Non-pharmaceutical interventions
- Food security and livelihoods
- Communication

(More information on these areas is provided in the following pages.)

3: Conduct simulations to test elements of the plan.

Simulate what it would be like if a pandemic hit to explore the implications of an outbreak in your district. Simulations can help to identify ways to improve stakeholder communication and collaboration, create resource-allocation strategies, and develop next steps that partners can take to improve their preparedness and response to pandemic influenza.

4: Develop plans for mobilizing community health workers.

Develop training plans for community health workers and other first responders to manage flu-related illnesses and complications. Training plans should include midwives, health promoters, teachers, members of unions or faith groups, and others who could help with community and household care during a pandemic.

5: Prepare messages and materials to educate the public.

It will be important to have materials ready to inform people what actions they can take in their communities and households if an outbreak hits. Examples of messages that can be used are found on the page Essential Messages.