



SWINE FLU - Affecting Business Continuity

In direct correlation with the increase incidence of SWINE influenza across 50 countries, we will see the escalation of psychosomatic complaint and catastrophic thought.

The antidote to the spread of panic, worry, stress and widespread absenteeism, is not so simple, but there are steps that can be taken by organisations to immunize against chaos in the workplace!

"Business continuity and management of disruption due to the pandemic, is imperative to reduce further consequences to the overall business".

Planning for the unexpected – Business Continuity Management

Business Continuity planning is a process that ensures the survival and continuance of your business in the event of a business disruption. It minimises the financial, legal, reputational and other damaging consequences arising from the disruption.

No matter how small or large your organisation, a scalable **Business Continuity Solution** is essential to create a robust and resilient organizational structure constructed to cope with any eventuality.

Business Continuity planning addresses three key considerations:

1. Prevention: Minimising the likelihood of an incident occurring.
2. Preparation: Ensuring adequate measures are in place to withstand an incident
3. Response: Practical action plans to effectively recover from an incident

Your organisation should implement occupational health and emergency action plans in preparedness for an influenza pandemic.

Turn risk into reward and take a proactive move towards safeguarding your

organisation:

- Protect your income base
- Ensure continuity of service
- Continuously improve your operations
- Provide a sound foundation for future growth
- Ensure peace of mind

Implementation of psychosocial support services

- Consider the need for information sharing with emergency planners and local businesses.
- Planning for the provision of psychosocial support services might include the following activities:
 - Ensure that managers, and supervisors are familiar with strategies for supporting staff and their families during times of crisis.
 - Training staff in behavioral techniques to help employees cope with grief, stress, exhaustion, anger, and fear during an emergency
 - Answer questions about infection control practices to prevent the spread of pandemic influenza in the workplace and employment issues related to illness, sick pay, staff rotation, and family concerns.

EAP's can provide material or personalized assistance to develop materials on:

- Stressors related to pandemic influenza
- Signs of distress
- Traumatic grief
- Psychosocial aspects related to management of mass fatalities
- Stress management and coping strategies
- Strategies for building and sustaining personal resilience
- Behavioral and psychological support resources
- Strategies for helping children and families in times of crisis
- Strategies for working with highly agitated patients

Resilience Program

Consider establishing a resilience program that will help employees prepare for, cope with, and recover from the social and psychological challenges of an emergency.

The implementation of an employee resilience program can assist to cope with the challenges caused by an influenza pandemic, businesses can provide the following:

- Plan for a long response (i.e., more than 1 year).

- Initiate an Employee Assistance Program

Provide program managers and supervisors with information on:

- Cognitive, physiological, behavioral, and emotional symptoms that might be exhibited by patients and their families (especially children), including symptoms that might indicate severe mental disturbance.
- Self-care (i.e., actions to safeguard physical and emotional health and maintain a sense of control and self-efficacy)
- Cultural (e.g., professional, educational, geographic, ethnic) differences that can affect communication.
- Potential impact of a pandemic on special populations (e.g., children, ethnic or cultural groups, the elderly).

OAS is subsidiary of Public Health Management especially trained to provide EAP services in Emergency response and pandemics.

Actions to be taken:

- Address psychological issues
- Important to have a plan - it could have a deep impact on the staff
- Better support, the better the recovery
- Poor planning can lead to low morale, poor performance, loss of productivity and rising absenteeism.

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