Pandemic Crisis Communication Plan

What to Do Right Now

The World Health Organization (WHO) has declared H1NI viral outbreak as Stage 5 on the 6-level pandemic alert scale. This means the WHO believes a global outbreak of the disease is imminent. Every organization faces a unique set of challenges in preparing for pandemic and educating their employees about what to do when. An effective pandemic crisis communication plan sets into motion a process to alert employees about what to do for their safety. It should be aligned with the organization’s specific staffing needs in operate in support of a business continuity plan. Following are some actions to consider for managing employee communications during a pandemic.

What to Do Now

☑ **Create an internal communication plan** – a process for reaching all employees through combinations of emails, intranet postings, flyers/posters, leader talking points, FAQs or a website situation room. The plan should identify key messages, a reliable process and the vehicles for providing continual updates and collecting feedback from employees on the rapidly developing H1N1 situation.

☑ **Create an external communication plan** – a process for reaching external stakeholders, customers, media, shareholders, suppliers, local community, healthcare providers, analysts, retirees, union representatives, etc.

What to Say to Employees

☑ **State the facts**: Connect employees to timely, accurate information from CDC, WHO and your State and County Health Departments. Provide clear instructions about what to do if employees suspect they are infected and who to contact if they are too ill to come to work.

☑ **Demystify the fear**: Communicate H1N1 flu facts from authoritative resources on how H1N1 is spread and how to avoid infection. Describe the effectiveness of current flu shots and the use of available masks and other commercial products.

☑ **Outline safety steps the organization is taking at work**: Clearly articulate and communicate preventive actions the organization is taking to avert or contain an H1N1 outbreak at work (focus on employee safety and hygiene).

☑ **Promote safety steps that employees can take at work**: Use posters, memos, emails, intranet postings, supervisor talking points, FAQs, etc. to promote preventive actions employees can take (hygiene and avoidance) – see WHO and CDC recommendations.

☑ **Describe the impact on the organization**: Describe the potential impact of a pandemic on your operations, services, travel, supply chain, business, revenues, etc., so employees can plan accordingly.

☑ **Summarize company policies/positions**: Describe health plan coverage (preventive and treatment), attendance, vacation accruals, paid time off, payroll continuation, travel, group meetings and how they are affected by the pandemic.

For More Information

Contact your Aon account manager or consultant for support in developing your pandemic crisis response and in organizing, preparing and implementing your crisis communication plan. Aon crisis communication consultants are prepared to help you develop and implement your plan.