

The Litaker Group Contingency Management Division • Case Study

Pandemic Influenza Preparedness for a Major US City

Background: Preparing for the potential consequences of pandemic influenza was not something most organizations considered until quite recently. However, new assessments of this public health threat by the World Health Organization and the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention have highlighted the very real probability of such an event occurring and the potential catastrophic consequences once it does. Consideration of the response requirements of a pandemic flu event demonstrates the critical linkage between public health services, hospitals, and emergency management agencies. As such, federal, state, and local governments throughout the United States have begun to re-evaluate emergency response and continuity of operations plans to ensure that they address pandemic flu scenarios.

One major city in the United States chose our contingency management consulting division to work with them to develop an exercise program, which would test the ability of city emergency response organizations and the medical community to respond to a pandemic influenza event.

Client Needs: The city had developed an all-hazards emergency plan that it believed would address any contingency. However, the unique response efforts required of a pandemic flu response caused city officials to seek a means to validate plans for this new hazard.

After considering a number of options, the city contacted our contingency management consulting division to work with city emergency management and medical community representatives to design an innovative approach to test its all-hazards plan for pandemic influenza.

Services Rendered: Members of the contingency management consulting division created both a tabletop and full-scale exercise for the assessment. The full-scale exercise included an innovative approach to solve some of the logistical and technical problems required in developing and distributing an evolving pandemic influenza scenario prior to the actual exercise.


This included introducing participants to a flu scenario distributed by email over a weeklong “lead-in” period prior to the full-scale exercise. At the conclusion of the “lead-in,” the scenario culminated with the full activation of the city emergency operations center, field operations at three hospital emergency rooms, and a Red Cross congregate care center. Almost one hundred simulators were used to create a realistic response environment for public health and city emergency officials.

Results: The city fully tested the public health and emergency management plans related to a pandemic influenza response and learned important lessons for improving future responses. Areas for improvement were identified in resource requirements, policies, and required training programs. This city is now better prepared to face a possible pandemic flu situation.

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