RISK COMMUNICATION
SAVES LIVES & LIVELIHOODS
Pandemic Influenza Preparedness Framework
RISK COMMUNICATION
fights disease & protects economies

Stops spread of illness & saves lives

Prevents travel & trade restrictions

Protects livestock & livelihoods

Protects economic development
Strong emergency risk communication: stopping disease spread, saving lives & livelihoods

In a pandemic or other public health emergency, authorities must engage individuals, communities and businesses, listen and respond to concerns, and support everyone by working together to prevent disease spread. This dynamic exchange of life-saving information is called risk communication.

Risk communication prevents spread of disease, saves lives and protects national and local economies. Without effective risk communication, people do not have the information they need to protect themselves, their families and their livelihoods.

When people know how to protect themselves, they can help stop the spread of disease, limiting the economic and social impact of an outbreak or emergency.

A priority for every country

Emergency risk communication is recognized as an essential component of preparedness and response to public health emergencies in many international agreements and WHO frameworks such as:

- International Health Regulations (2005)
- Pandemic Influenza Risk Management, WHO Interim Guidance (2013)
- Pandemic Influenza Preparedness Framework (2011)

WHO’s risk communication is a core element of the Pandemic Influenza Preparedness Framework (PIP) which brings together governments, industry, other stakeholders and WHO to implement a global approach to pandemic influenza preparedness and response. Its key goal includes improving and strengthening the sharing of influenza viruses with human pandemic potential.
Risk communication is a dynamic process of sharing & responding to information about a public health threat.

- Listening & responding to concerns
- Sharing information quickly in ways people trust
- Building trust & understanding
- Engaging everyone in fighting disease
- Stable economies & communities
Strong risk communication is built before an emergency

Effective risk communication during a health emergency requires planning and investment before the emergency occurs.

Many countries have learned that it is better to have a strong system in place that can respond to any health emergency, rather than to prepare for each emergency individually. Taking this ‘all-hazards approach’, WHO supports countries by strengthening their ability to prepare for and respond to any public health hazard, including pandemic influenza.

Prior to a pandemic or other public health emergency, countries should have risk communication systems in place to:

- deploy trained risk communication professionals to support the response from the very beginning until the end of the emergency;
- reach out to and engage local communities and respond to their concerns;
- rapidly produce and share communications through channels that people use and trust;
- test the effectiveness and appropriateness of public health messaging, and adjust advice as needed;
- test risk communication capacity, including through simulation exercises; and
- coordinate communications between government, partners and affected sectors such as public health, agriculture, livestock, transport, trade, tourism, points of entry and education as well as with local industry and civil society.
PAHO/WHO can provide advice and resources to strengthen risk communication in all countries. For priority countries, additional support includes:

- needs analysis to identify strengths, barriers and gaps;
- priority-setting workshops to agree on guiding principles and develop an action plan;
- technical support for policy development and institutional planning;
- landscape mapping to understand local and national media audience and reach;
- training and skills development;
- executive coaching for senior decision-makers;
- media workshops for journalists and editors; and
- simulation and tabletop exercises to test national emergency risk communication capacity.

Under the Pandemic Influenza Preparedness Framework, PAHO/WHO helps countries strengthen risk communication skills and systems, working closely with governments and partners. This helps countries prepare for future public health emergencies such as pandemic influenza.
POOR COMMUNICATION devastates communities & local industry

Leads to illness, fear & death

Hurts the economy

Destroys jobs

Incites civil unrest

NO TRAVEL NO TRADE
More information

About WHO’s risk communication capacity-building activities
http://www.who.int/risk-communication/en/

About the Pandemic Influenza Preparedness (PIP) Framework
www.who.int/influenza/pip

About the International Health Regulations
www.who.int/topics/internationa_health_regulations

About WHO’s Emergency Response Framework
http://www.who.int/hac/about/erf/en

About health systems strengthening
www.who.int/topics/health_systems

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