

September 11, 2007

DIRECTIVE:	JOB CORPS INFORMATION NOTICE NO. 06-08
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TO: ALL JOB CORPS NATIONAL OFFICE STAFF
ALL JOB CORPS REGIONAL DIRECTORS
ALL JOB CORPS CENTER DIRECTORS
ALL JOB CORPS CENTER OPERATORS
ALL NATIONAL TRAINING AND SUPPORT CONTRACTORS
ALL OUTREACH, ADMISSIONS, AND CTS CONTRACTORS

FROM: ESTHER R. JOHNSON, Ed.D.
National Director
Office of Job Corps

SUBJECT: Pandemic Influenza Preparedness of Job Corps Centers

1. Purpose. To provide center staff with necessary information to prepare for the possibility of pandemic influenza.
2. Background. A pandemic, or a worldwide epidemic, occurs when a new virus is introduced into the population. The population has no natural resistance to this virus, causing many people to become seriously ill. There is a concern that the H5N1 strain of influenza, now affecting birds in Africa, Asia and Europe, could mutate. Cases of H5N1 influenza have been documented in humans, resulting from animal-to-human contact, in several countries. If this virus mutates to a strain of influenza that can be passed through human-to-human contact, a pandemic may occur. Currently, no vaccine exists to prevent avian influenza.

Job Corps currently has procedures in place for health care delivery, management of infectious diseases, emergency planning, and delivery of immunizations. Procedures include:

- a Centers are required to keep current health care guidelines (both treatment guidelines and symptomatic management guidelines) in the health and wellness center. Annually, each center must submit a memorandum to the

Regional Office indicating which guidelines have been modified. Symptomatic management guidelines are provided for flu-like symptoms, including fever, cold and sinus congestion, and coughing.

- b. Each year, centers are required to submit an emergency plan to the Regional Office for approval.
 - c. Most Job Corps centers offer influenza immunizations for students before the onset of flu season. Prior to receiving an immunization, health and wellness center staff provide students with a Vaccine Information Statement (VIS) to explain the benefits and risks of a vaccine.
3. Action. In the event of an influenza pandemic, Job Corps centers will have to act quickly to prevent the spread on infection. Centers should take the following steps to prepare for the possibility of an influenza pandemic:
- a. If a pandemic occurs, Job Corps centers will need to utilize emergency plans specific to their center and employ area resources. Emergency plans should include strategies for evacuating sick students from center while not exposing members of the community to infection on public transportation or elsewhere in the community. Job Corps National Office safety and health staff are currently working to develop a template pandemic influenza plan for centers. It is expected that each center will use this template to create an individualized plan that will meet the center's needs in the event of pandemic influenza. In the meantime, centers should begin brainstorming and becoming familiar with relevant local resources. Centers should also refer to Attachment A – Job Corps Pandemic Influenza Planning Checklist, to assist with pandemic influenza emergency planning.
 - b. In the event of an influenza outbreak on a Job Corps center or pandemic influenza, focus on preventing the spread of infection. Pandemic preparedness documents highlight the need to prevent the spread of infection by keeping sick individuals apart from healthy individuals and promoting good hygiene, such as hand washing. Health and wellness staff should treat students' symptoms, prevent the spread of infection, and contact local health departments for guidance. Students and/or staff may need to be medically separated in the event of an influenza outbreak to prevent others on center from becoming ill.
 - c. Form relationships with local health departments and respond quickly to directions from the Center for Disease Control (CDC) local health departments, and the Job Corps National Office.
 - d. If any serious communicable disease, including influenza, is detected on center, Center Directors are instructed to arrange for an immediate

examination by a physician or qualified health professional of all affected center personnel and students and assure that all cases are handled in

accordance with current CDC and local public health department recommendations and guidelines. Center staff is encouraged to act quickly and appropriately when responding to the first case diagnosed to prevent an epidemic on center.

- e. Influenza is not a notifiable disease at the national level. However, in the event of a pandemic outbreak, centers may be required to report cases to their local health departments. Job Corps Center Directors must report significant incidents, including outbreaks of infectious diseases, to the National Office of Job Corps, with an information copy to the Regional Office.
- f. Opportunities to assist in the community in the event of an influenza outbreak may be available to Job Corps health and wellness personnel, as well as center staff and students, through the American Red Cross (<http://www.redcross.org/>) or other such organizations. However, if a pandemic avian influenza occurs, the virus is predicted to be highly contagious. Non-medical personnel may not be able to assist in helping those affected, as the risk of contracting the virus might be too great.

Attachment B contains a list of resources that will assist center staff in learning about pandemic influenza and emergency planning.

- 4. Expiration Date. Until superseded.
- 5. Inquiries. Inquiries should be directed to Barbara Grove at (202) 693-3116, or email to grove.barbara@dol.gov.

Attachments

- A – Job Corps Pandemic Influenza Planning Checklist
- B – Influenza Resources