

It is difficult to predict when the next influenza pandemic will occur or how severe it will be. Wherever and whenever a pandemic starts, everyone around the world is at risk; especially populations with compromised health issues. It is expected that such an event will quickly overwhelm the healthcare system locally, regionally, and nationally. The impact on healthcare facilities will be shortages of staff, equipment and other necessary resources and supplies. Despite recommendations and requirements for disaster planning, some facilities may be unprepared for a pandemic event. Collaboration with state and federal partners is vital to ensure that healthcare workers are adequately prepared for and protected during an influenza pandemic.



What will the Department of Public Health’s role be in the event of a pandemic emergency?

What resources will be (or not be) available to assist healthcare facilities with patient care and coordination of services?

What happens if the Large Dialysis Organizations cannot serve as a back-up to dialysis providers?

On September 25, 2008, Network of New England (Network 1) and other Connecticut healthcare agencies, along with the Connecticut Department of Public Health, hosted a one-day conference on Continuity of Operations Planning (COOP) to help address serious concerns about the impact of a pandemic influenza. The purpose of the important seminar, **“Preparing for a Pandemic Event: Developing a COOP Plan for your Facility/Agency”**, was to provide vital information and practical suggestions to prepare and coordinate plans for a pandemic event in Connecticut. It was designed for administrators and other representatives of nursing homes, home health agencies and ESRD facilities who are responsible for the oversight and implementation of COOP. There were over 300 in attendance, of which 25 were from CT dialysis providers. The program included a general session on State and Federal initiatives, modifications of Standards of Care and provider-specific group discussions, including a separate ESRD breakout session. The Network invited guest speaker Wendy Fung-Schrag, Director of Advocacy and Governmental Affairs, FMC North America, to lead the dialysis group discussion and explain KCER services and resources with regards to pandemic preparedness and response.

Seminar presentations can be found at www.networkofnewengland.org/meetings and pandemic preparedness tools and resources are available at www.networkofnewengland.org/emerg.htm