**Communicable Disease Emergency Planning Tabletop Exercise for Indigenous Communities**

***Scenario and Questions***

***November 2020***

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**What is the scenario? What questions should be used during the exercise?**

The scenario is a pretend situation that could be real. It describes a communicable disease emergency from start to finish. Scenario changes describe new information that changes the situation.

There are questions for each scenario change. People can share their thoughts even if they aren’t responsible for that area.

The questions prompt you to think about your emergency response. They address all four pillars in Emergency Management: Prevention and Mitigation – Preparedness – Response – Recovery. They aren’t a complete list of everything to think about. You might not talk about every question. You should talk about some questions from each topic area. The questions you choose depend on your community’s needs. Your group might decide to spend more time on some questions.

This exercise will help you learn how prepared you are for a communicable disease emergency. You will notice strengths and areas of improvement. The exercise will help you prioritize your work.

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| **SCENARIO** |
| **There are reports of a new respiratory illness all around the world. Sick people have signs and symptoms that are like a bad seasonal influenza. They are sick for longer than normal. Healthy young adults who become sick are hospitalized more than normal. The illness spreads quickly. Cases are showing up in different places around Canada. The sickness seems different from what health experts have seen before. People seem to have little immunity to it. More and more people are getting sick. Health experts fear that an influenza pandemic might be starting.** |

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| **EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AND COMMUNICABLE DISEASE**  **EMERGENCY PLANNING**  **How will you guide your community through a possible communicable**  **disease emergency?** |
| What emergency plans are in place for your community?   * What do these plans include? Examples are: preventive actions, business continuity, when the plan should be used. * Where are the plans kept? Who can access the plans? * How often are the plans updated? Who updates the plans? |
| What emergency preparedness and response training does your community do?   * When are these training sessions held? * Who participates in these training sessions? * How do you record what you learn during these sessions? What do you do with this information? |
| Do you have mutual aid agreements with other communities or groups?   * Where are these agreements kept? Who can access these agreements? * What details do the agreements include? * When are these agreements updated? Who updates these agreements? |
| What are your community’s strengths? How can you use those strengths in an emergency? |

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| **COMMUNICATIONS**  **Accurate, consistent, and timely information helps people stay calm. It helps them decide what to do. How do you share knowledge with your community and outside partners?** |
| How do you receive knowledge about the situation? |
| What knowledge do you share with outside partners? Health care staff? Community members? |
| How do you share knowledge with health care staff? Community members? What makes it hard to share knowledge? |
| Who is responsible for updating health care staff? Community members? Outside partners? |
| Are there trusted community members who can help share knowledge? |

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| **SCENARIO CHANGE #1** |
| **The number of people who are sick with the illness is increasing in your region.**  **More people are being hospitalized.** |

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| **SURVEILLANCE**  **How do you know if the illness is getting closer to your community? How do you track changes as the illness spreads?** |
| How do you keep track of influenza-like illness in community settings? For example, schools, day cares, and band council office? |
| Who helps you keep track of cases of unknown respiratory illness? Who can you ask for advice? |
| How does your community report influenza-like illness to local and regional health agencies? Can you do anything to make this process quicker? |
| What do you do with the data from the community? What do you do with the external data about the illness? |
| What sources can provide useful data for the community? What sources can provide useful external data about the illness? |

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| **PUBLIC HEALTH MEASURES**  **How do you protect healthy people from getting sick? How do you prevent sick people from spreading the illness?** |
| Who advises you on public health measures to put into practice? |
| How will you protect community members? Is the information provided written in a language that is easy to understand? |
| Is the information provided in easily accessible locations? |
| What community level public health measures do you consider? What helps prevent illness in community settings? When do you start the public health measures? |
| What public health measures do you recommend for people? Are there traditional practices that might be helpful? Are there traditional practices that might be harmful? |
| How do you tell the community about the public health advice? |
| Are there trusted community members who can set an example? |

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| **SCENARIO CHANGE #2** |
| **People in your community are getting sick with the new illness. The number of cases in your community climbs every day. Your systems are overwhelmed** |

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| **INFECTION PREVENTION AND CONTROL AND**  **OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH**  **How do you prevent the illness from spreading to health care staff?** |
| How will you protect health care staff? Are all health care staff fit-tested for an N95 mask? Do you have the proper PPE to provide to the health care staff? |
| How will you protect people seeking health services from the illness? |
| How do you know that health care staff are “fit to work” during the outbreak? |
| Who gives you advice on plans for infection prevention and control? Who gives you advice on plans for occupational health? |
| What infection prevention and control training is done in your community?  On a regular basis? During the outbreak?   * Who participates in these training sessions? * How often are these training sessions held? |
| Are health care providers and community leaders providing information to clients and the community about wearing appropriate masks according to the latest guidelines? For example: non-surgical face masks. For example: non-surgical face masks. |
| Are health care providers following evidence-informed practices for the sequence of putting on and taking off PPE (low-risk and high-risk)? |
| Does the staff know how to safely manage, store, and dispose of biohazard or infectious waste? For example, test kits, garbage holding infectious materials. |

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| **CONTINUITY OF OPERATIONS PLAN**  **How will you maintain vital services in your community as more people become sick?** |
| What will you do when the number of sick people coming to the health facility exceeds the staff, space, and supplies? |
| How will you support over-worked health care staff? |
| What community, social, and health services are the most important? How will you decide which ones to maintain? |
| How will you maintain these essential services? |
| How will you provide services to people who stay home due to illness or self-isolation? |
| What strengths can your community draw on to maintain vital services? |

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| **SCENARIO CHANGE #3** |
| **Health experts declare a worldwide influenza pandemic. Community leaders also declare a communicable disease emergency in your community.** |

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| **VERIFY THE DIAGNOSIS**  **How do you know people in your community are sick with the illness?** |
| Lab specimens may be time and temperature sensitive. What is your plan if there is bad weather when transporting specimens to the lab? |
| What is the process to handle and transport samples? |
| What do you do with a positive test result? |

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| **ANTIVIRAL MEDICATION**  **There is no vaccine yet for the virus. How do you treat people who are sick? How do you prevent sickness in people who are exposed to the illness?** |
| How do you know there is enough antiviral medicine for those who need it? |
| How do you share knowledge about if, when, and where to receive the medicine? |
| Your community has vulnerable people. Some people have disabilities or can’t leave their home. How do you make sure those people receive the services they need? |
| How do you know whether antiviral medicines are working? How do you track and report serious or unusual side effects? |
| **ILLNESS MANAGEMENT**  **How will health care staff know how to assess and treat people who are sick?** |
| Who advises on illness management? |
| What information do health care staff need to feel protected and prepared? What supplies do they need? |
| What do you do when people come to the health facility with symptoms? What do you do if the symptoms are urgent? What do you do if patients cannot be managed in community? |
| Do clients, families and health care staff have safe access to traditional health, medicines, and healing practices during the pandemic? |
| Are community members able to safely access knowledge keepers and Elders for support and guidance? |
| What is the morgue capacity? |

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| **Traditional Medicine, Cultural Support and Mental Wellness**  **How will health organization leaders and community leaders support health care providers and community members in traditional practices of health and wellness?** |
| Has leadership provided information on traditional teachings and ceremonies in a culturally safe environment? |
| Are community members and staff aware of the process to access traditional medicines, cultural support, and healing during the pandemic? |
| Are leaders facilitating staff to become familiar with the historical trauma communicable diseases have caused to Indigenous peoples? |
| Have community leaders and staff discussed the best approach in helping patients cope with the mistrust and anxiety they may have when transferring to another care facility? |

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| **SCENARIO CHANGE #4** |
| **A vaccine for the pandemic influenza virus is produced. It will arrive in your community in about 10 days.** |

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| **VACCINE**  **How will you vaccinate many people in a short period of time?** |
| Where will you store the vaccine and related supplies? You may need a large space. |
| You want to vaccinate community members quickly. What changes do you make to routine vaccination practices? |
| How do you monitor whether the vaccine is effective? How do you track and report serious or unusual side effects? |
| How do you tell community members when and where to be vaccinated? |
| Your community has vulnerable people. Some people have disabilities or can’t leave their home. How do you vaccinate those people? |
| What are usual vaccination rates in your community? How can you increase the rates for this vaccine? Will you need to address any anti-vaccine concerns? |

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| **SCENARIO CHANGE #5** |
| **The pandemic ends. Fewer people are sick in your community. Community leaders decide the emergency is over.** |

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| **COMMUNITY RECOVERY AND RESILIENCE**  **How do you help your community recover? How do you prepare for future events?** |
| Many Indigenous people in Canada have faced trauma. This emergency may add to past trauma. People will react in different ways. Some may try to cope in harmful ways. Knowing this, what programming is most important during recovery? |
| What events can be held to recognize the community’s losses and heal? How can you support people and celebrate resilience? |
| What can you do to build resilience for future emergencies? |