

Pandemic Procedures for the Hart Area Public Library

Background: The following background information is provided in order to explain the conditions for a pandemic as well as what might occur and provide for an initial discussion of preparedness recognizing the sudden nature of a pandemic and the strain it can place on our workforce. A pandemic may occur when three conditions have been met:

1. a new influenza virus subtype emerges;
2. it infects humans causing serious illness; and
3. it spreads easily and sustainably among humans.

The Corona virus meets all three of these conditions. Although the majority of the outbreak is limited to China, a few cases have been detected in the United States.

The World Health Organization (WHO) has defined phases for tracking a potential pandemic:

- Inter-pandemic phase -- New virus in animals, no human cases
 - Low risk of human cases
 - Higher risk of human cases
- Pandemic alert -- New Virus causes human cases. No or very limited human-to-human transmission
 - Evidence of increased human-to-human transmission
 - Evidence of significant human-to-human transmission
- Pandemic
 - Efficient and sustained human-to-human transmission

At present the Center for Disease Control (CDC) recognizes that the Corona Virus (2019-nCov) is highly contagious, and has been detected in the United States, however, is not spreading as rapidly as in China.

Symptoms of 2019-nCoV include:

- Fever
- Cough
- Shortness of breath

Preventative Steps

The CDC shares that there are simple preventative actions that can be taken, including:

- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth with unwashed hands.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. Use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol if soap and water are not available.

If HAPL Staff are Sick with Flu-like Symptoms

- Stay home. If a lack of available leave time is preventing you from staying home, contact the

library and we will facilitate additional leave time so that you can remain home and avoid spreading the flu.

- Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue and then immediately throw it in the trash.
- Clean and disinfect work surfaces and frequently touched objects daily.

If a Staff Member from HAPL Has Flu-like Symptoms

Masks are required for use by members of staff, up to the point where consideration might need to be given to closing. Since person-to-person contact and airborne pathogens are thought to be the major modes of contracting the flu, there will be a concern for touching objects and or breathing in common space, especially where sneezing or coughing may occur. Patrons are required to wear masks. If a patron does not have or will not wear a mask they will not be allowed in our facility. It is a matter of protecting others. We will be respectful and helpful, but we will protect our other patrons and staff but refusing them entrance. It will be hard to distinguish a common cold from the more dangerous flu. It will be prudent to treat potential dangers seriously and focus on what might be the worst case. Masks (enough for staff) should be procured in the event of a pandemic.

Using disinfecting cleaners on common work surfaces will be helpful in killing germs. This is especially important for items that are shared or commonly touched by multiple people, such as phones, computer keyboards and door handles. Staff will not share office supplies and will disinfect them at the beginning and end of each day. Staff in all areas will be called upon to assist in this process by using disposable cleaning gloves and disinfecting wipes or cleanser to clean surfaces.

More information will be needed involving the handling of materials being returned. As a measure of comfort, masks and disposable cleaning gloves will be available to persons working with the return bins and incoming bags. Some of these measures may be more psychological than physical. However, it would be best to error on the side of caution. This will help provide reassurance during a crisis.

Pamphlets and signs produced by local, state and national health and safety agencies should be distributed. We will produce information to post in the library as well. Social responsible distancing will be marked, hand sanitizer will be readily available and the use of it will be encouraged by signs and verbally by the staff.

Potential Staff Issues:

Staff with aging parents or family members or who themselves are in a high-risk group will be allowed to take time off using up all available paid leave.

Supplies for Personnel

The library will purchase the approved facemasks and have these on hand. In addition, disinfecting cleaners, gloves for protection, as well as disinfecting wipes or cleanser should be available. Instructions for how to maintain a sterile area or field should be discussed.

Closing Library Facilities

Decisions to modify hours of operation or closure of library facilities will be made by the Library Director and communicated through the normal procedure for closures. If closure is deemed necessary during a pandemic, it's most likely that all HAPL operations will be cease.

Working Under Controlled Circumstances:

- Promotion of the e-Resource collection to patrons without leaving their homes.
- Continuing phone reference
- Some collection maintenance may also be possible during a period.
- Suspend due dates and hold expiration dates for all circulating materials until an all clear has been issued by the Library.
- Meetings should be conducted over the phone vs. in person. Board meeting and staff meetings will be conducted over the internet.
- Returned items will be checked in by staff, if allowed by law, taking all personal precautions in the handling of such items for the employee's personal safety.