

In order to address the issues and topics related to Pandemic Influenza for our community, the St. Joseph County Pandemic Influenza Working Group was established by the St. Joseph County Health Department in 2005 and has met on a monthly basis to this date as a part of the existing emergency planning and response structure in our county. Although this group focuses primarily on health issues related to a pandemic, a number of important collaborations and community-wide planning efforts have occurred as a result. Members of this group make up a multi-disciplinary representation that is continually expanded to include additional groups as needed. Some of the major successes of the group to-date include the following:

- A county-wide, multidisciplinary Local Pandemic Influenza Summit held in May 2006 with speakers from the CDC and the State Department of Health.
- Establishment the St. Joseph County Pandemic Influenza Response Plan and continual updates as necessary.
- Collaboration with emergency management to establish a county-wide operational plan for Pandemic Influenza.
- Several Tabletop Exercises conducted addressing a variety of pandemic influenza issues including but not limited to school closures, medical supplies management & distribution, medical surge, communications, and public information.
- Partnered with all St. Joseph County Wal-Mart stores in October 2007 on a Pan Flu Educational Campaign where a collection of 2 weeks worth of supplies for 1 person was given away at each location. This event was featured in two separate South Bend Tribune Articles.
- Several presentations to a variety of local agencies to further planning efforts.
- Pandemic Countermeasures Planning document created and submitted for signatures in order to receive antiviral medication and other supplies from the Strategic National Stockpile during a pandemic.
- Functional Exercise held in June 2008 to test the local plan in areas of incident management, communication, public information, and medical supplies management.
- Sponsored a community wide education campaign through billboards, public transportation advertising, and press releases from June 2008- June 2009.
- County-wide Summit held in May 2009 to update community with speakers from the Indiana State Department of Health and Local Planners. Over 181 community partners attended.

Local efforts currently seek to:

- Stay current in planning efforts using relevant and up-to-date information related to Pandemic Influenza from the State, CDC and World Health Organization.
- Continue to develop and implement education efforts about Pandemic Influenza and empower target groups to enhance individual, business and community planning.
- Enhance the current plan to address issues of mass fatality planning, alternate care sites and mental health services.