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& UNIVERSITIES

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## MEMORANDUM

Date: May 12, 2006

To: College/University Pandemic Planning Liaisons

From: Laura M. King  
Vice Chancellor – Chief Financial Officer

Subject: Avian flu pandemic planning information update #3

Planning for a possible avian flu pandemic is underway at the national and state level. Feedback from campuses assures me that the effort has now begun with you and your campus leadership as well. I am writing to pass on additional planning guidance developed over the past several weeks. Several members of the Minnesota State Colleges and Universities steering committee recently attended a meeting hosted by the state coordinating agencies and information from that gathering is contained in this memo as well.

This letter is my third communication to you concerning planning for a possible avian flu pandemic. I will use this format to convey any new, updated directions in the months ahead. Resource information is also available at <http://www.chancellor.mnscu.edu/avianflu/index.html>. The following information is organized by committee with principal responsibility. Your committee structure may be slightly different.

The May Leadership Council agenda included an extended discussion of this topic and recognition that preparation of a plan at each of our colleges and universities is a critical obligation of our shared administration. Interest also was expressed in identification of any and all means to streamline and simplify the planning process. You have my commitment that all efforts are being made to do so in support of your campus planning work. We are handicapped a bit in our ability to assist you by the need to defer to the state agencies with jurisdiction and their timetables. Where possible, we will communicate interim guidance pending state agency decisions.

As a reminder, we will need a copy of the first draft of your plan by June 16<sup>th</sup>. My office is scheduling regional meetings in July at several locations around the state. The draft schedule and agenda are attached. The meetings will provide a forum for presentation, discussion and problem solving as we work to build plans for each of our institutions and the system as a whole. At the time of these meetings I will also convey any information from the Division of Homeland Security and Emergency Management after having met with them on all our behalf in late June.

## Overall Coordinating Committee

**Regional meetings** – I am asking that each campus bring its coordinating committee to the regional meetings (Attachment 1). You are free to bring other team leaders if you wish. The draft agenda for the meetings is attached (Attachment 2). The meetings are designed to encourage dialogue and interaction. I recognize summer scheduling is a challenge and hope that this early notice will provide you some flexibility to ensure the greatest possible attendance.

**Sector meetings and conference calls** – We are interested in facilitating conference calls with subgroups of the planning teams. We have already done so for facilities planners and have calls coming up with university CFOs, academic and student affairs officers, and members of the student health services community. Please let my office know if there are other topics that you would find of interest.

**Request for uniform guidance** – Several presidents have expressed an interest in receiving more uniform guidance in order to streamline the campus planning process. I would be interested in the areas where you would find that of assistance. I will be meeting with state health dept officials soon to discuss the state's expectations for us and will communicate any guidance from that meeting. Please communicate with my office if there are topics that you think could be more uniformly addressed.

**State overall planning framework** - A document released by the state's Pandemic Flu Executive Committee titled *State of Minnesota State Agency Pandemic Influenza Service Continuation Guide* will be mailed to the liaisons under separate cover. The document is directed toward the state's executive branch agencies and provides insight into state agency planning. The section concerning service continuation planning begins on page 9 and may be of assistance to you. In the state's planning scheme, consistent with the National Incident Management System, the contact with our colleges and universities will occur through my office. You need not and should not establish lines of communication independently.

**State shutdown guidance** – The above referenced state guidelines include directions for planning service priorities in the event of a shutdown ordered by the governor. The guidelines define "critical or core functions" and provide service continuation guidelines. The guidelines do not provide any insight into the question of what event(s) will trigger a shutdown. I will pursue that question and attempt to provide more guidance.

**Employment conditions** - Provisions of labor agreements and compensation plans will remain in effect in the early stages of the pandemic and may or may not be suspended in a statewide emergency. The Governor has significant emergency powers that may allow this. Some employees are members of the National Guard, Red Cross Disaster Teams, local emergency medical and police reserve organizations, which may preclude them from reporting to work if activated by those organizations.

**Think about border relations** – An added complexity for some colleges/universities concerns their relations with neighboring states/other jurisdictions. Please be sure and pursue this element of the planning process if necessary. Let my office know if we can assist in any fashion.

## Academic Administration Committee

**Catalog information**—Most colleges and universities have a statement in their catalog and course schedules that reserves the right to cancel, postpone and re-schedule course offerings. Please review these documents to assure that you have such a statement in these documents—both hard copy and on-line.

**Federal and state financial aid implications** – We have initiated discussions with our financial aid contact in Chicago and at the Minnesota Office of Higher Education to understand their thinking and planning regarding the financial aid implications in case of closings. As we are able to gather this information we will distribute it to the pandemic planning liaison along with the financial aid directors.

**Travel abroad** – The CDC monitors avian flu outbreaks throughout the world and keeps travel recommendations current on their website [www.cdc.gov/travel/](http://www.cdc.gov/travel/) and [http://www.cdc.gov/travel/other/avian\\_influenza\\_se\\_asia\\_2005.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/travel/other/avian_influenza_se_asia_2005.htm). During a pandemic you will need to support voluntary and mandatory movement restrictions. Recommendations may include restricting travel to and from affected domestic and international areas, recalling nonessential employees working in or near an affected area when an outbreak begins, and distributing health information to persons returning from affected areas. In planning international education opportunities, you will need to consider trip cancellation procedures, restricted travel regions, repatriation, academic credit issues and shelter-in-place guidelines. In planning for international students attending your college/university, you will need to consider assisting international students who may be restricted from traveling to their homeland. These questions and others are listed on page 9 of the planning template.

## Operations Committee

**Stockpiling recommendations** – Much of the national and state literature includes emphasis on the importance of stockpiling critical materials and supplies. We have been unsuccessful in identifying any planning guidance on this issue and so have generated the enclosed list for your use (Attachment 3). It should be viewed as a starting point subject to your careful consideration of campus circumstances. A key element of planning in this area concerns the availability of supply chain redundancy. Please consider the availability of multiple suppliers as you undertake stockpiling planning. We are interested in analyzing the demand and utility of establishment of a central stockpile facility for our colleges and universities. Please consider this possibility in your deliberations and be prepared to talk about it at the regional meeting.

**Infrastructure redundancy** – An issue related to stockpiling concerns the capacity of your physical plant to undertake utility infrastructure redundancy. Please include in your examination of this question the capacity of your ITS infrastructure. A statewide ITS committee has been established and will be communicating with your pandemic planning liaison and your CIO's in the days ahead.

## Facilities Committee

**Quarantine/inoculation/isolation plans** – The April 12, 2006 memo from my office included several scenarios which have significant human resource and physical plant impacts. I have since been advised by state leadership that the state plan is unlikely to include significant quarantine strategies (scenario 4 in the April 12, 2006 memo). It is the view of the Minnesota Department of

Health (MDH) officials that closure by executive order would more likely occur. Consequently, please do not spend any additional time thinking through Scenario 4. If the state's position changes, I will certainly let you know.

**Local/regional plans** – A critical part of the planning process concerns making contact with and reaching agreement concerning the role your college/university campus will play in local and regional planning assumptions. At our July meetings we will specifically inquire about your relationship with other governmental entities.

## Healthcare Committee

**Employee readiness** - We continue to search for helpful training materials for employee readiness/awareness training. We are hoping something will be available soon. I would urge you to include training information for you employees concerning family readiness; family planning, home stockpiling, home cash supplies etc.

A helpful guide for individuals and families is available at:  
[http://www.hsem.state.mn.us/readyminnesota/New\\_Ready\\_Web/indivfam.pdf](http://www.hsem.state.mn.us/readyminnesota/New_Ready_Web/indivfam.pdf).

**Use of personal protective equipment** – Several campuses have inquired of us concerning the guidelines/recommendations for personal protective equipment.

Information about this topic can be found at:  
<http://www.fda.gov/cdrh/ppe/fluoutbreaks.html>.

## Communications Committee

**Web strategy** - The system and campus Web sites will be our primary communication tool for management of community, campus and employee relations the event of an outbreak. Linda Kohl is developing a web strategy for all of our use. The goal is to have uniform, consistent content and visual guides on all system and college/university Web pages. She will be consulting with key communicators to provide advice and input into the project.

**Communicate with employee representatives** – As part of your planning process, please be thoughtful and diligent concerning communication with the employees and with their representatives. We have undertaken conversations with the statewide representatives to advise them of the planning process and timeline and the roles and responsibilities of DOER, the system Human Resources division and the employees themselves. We will keep you informed about any agreements which might be made regarding possible modifications to contractual requirements in the event of a pandemic. Please note that these kinds of agreements must be made at a statewide level.

We are all committed to sharing as much information as possible in as timely a manner as possible.

**Communications with students and parents** - In the spirit of early planning, and in order to provide a sense of security, please work with Linda Kohl, the system communication liaison, in developing a communications piece to be sent to incoming students and their parents regarding the plans and preparations for a possible pandemic. This communication should be straightforward, but not alarmist, and should provide information Web site addresses and plans for communications to parents. These communications are even more important for the families of international students. I would ask that any communication be first discussed with the system communication liaison.

c: James H. McCormick, Chancellor  
College and University Presidents  
System Pandemic Steering Committee  
Cabinet

Attachments (3)