

Perth County Influenza Pandemic Plan

Chapter 2: Pandemic Management

TABLE OF CONTENTS

2.1 Pandemic Management in Perth County	2-4
<i>Figure 2-1 – IMS Framework</i>	<i>2-5</i>
2.2 Pandemic Incident Management System	2-6
<i>2.2.1 Pandemic Unified Command</i>	<i>2-6</i>
<i>2.2.2 Communication Manager</i>	<i>2-7</i>
<i>2.2.3 Safety Officer</i>	<i>2-7</i>
<i>2.2.4 Liaison Officer</i>	<i>2-8</i>
<i>2.2.5 Health Sector</i>	<i>2-8</i>
<i>2.2.6 Municipal Sector</i>	<i>2-9</i>
2.3 Incident Action Plans	2-10
2.4 The Operation Cycle	2-10
<i>2.4.1 Timing of the Operation Cycle</i>	<i>2-10</i>
<i>2.4.2 Meeting Portion of the Operation Cycle</i>	<i>2-11</i>
<i>2.4.3 Working Portion of the Operation Cycle</i>	<i>2-11</i>

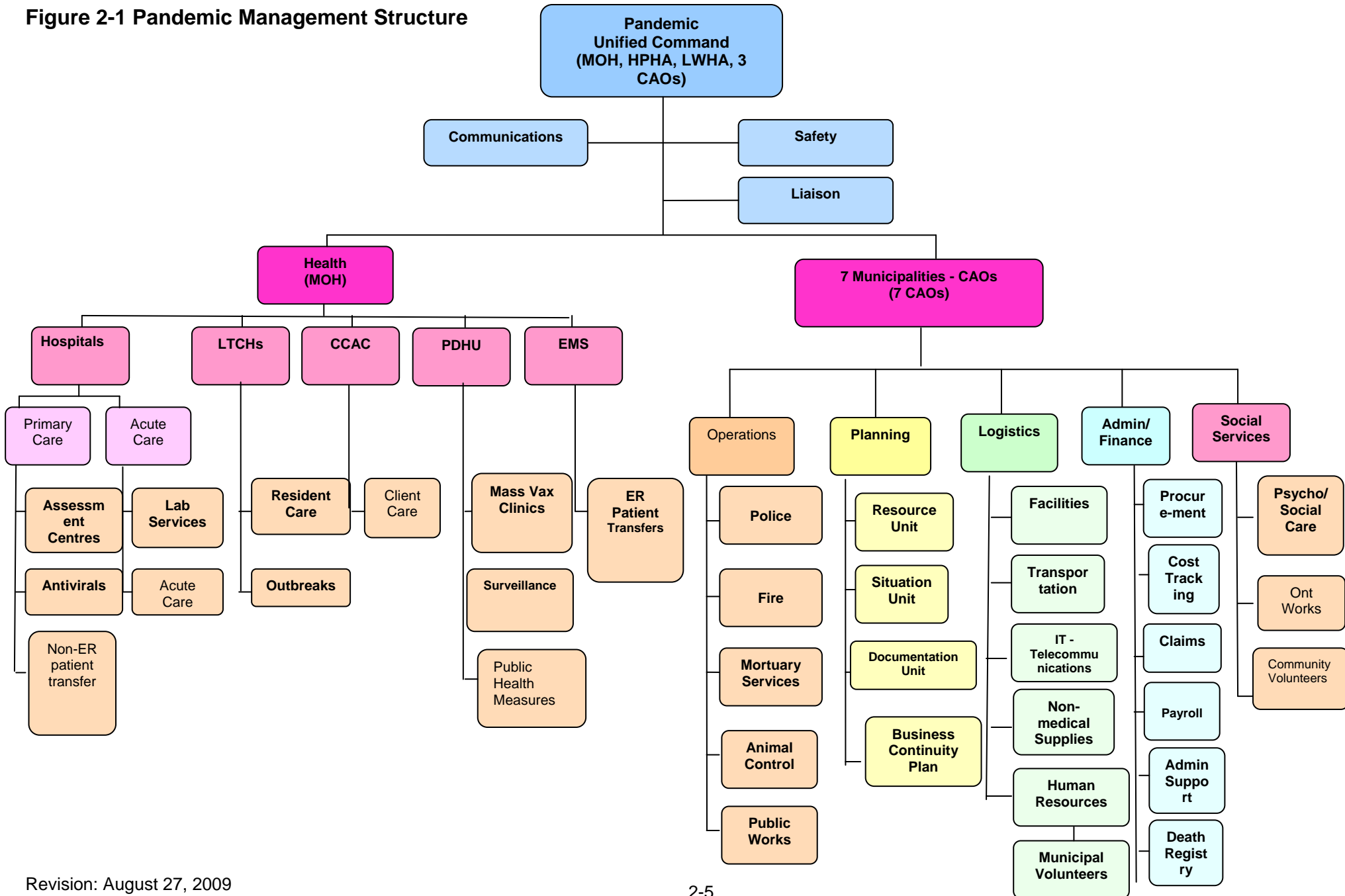
2.1 PANDEMIC MANAGEMENT IN PERTH COUNTY

Responding to an influenza pandemic in Perth County will require a coordinated response from the health sector, public health and each Municipality including the County, the City of Stratford, and the Town of St. Marys.

Pandemic management in Perth County will follow the concept of the Incident Management System (IMS). Lead by the Pandemic Unified Command (PUC), the IMS system allows for the delegation of tasks, provides a manageable span of control, efficiently manages resources, and consolidates action plans. Although not every stakeholder within the pandemic response operates under an IMS system, the proposed structure provides the benefits of IMS while allowing each agency to operate according to their own emergency plans.

The following chart indicates which agencies are responsible for certain functions, and illustrates the reporting structure for a pandemic event.

Figure 2-1 Pandemic Management Structure



2.2 PANDEMIC INCIDENT MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

Once the Pandemic Plan has been activated by the Medical Officer of Health (see 1.10.4), the Pandemic Unified Command will ensure an appropriate Incident Management System structure is implemented.

The Incident Management System allows the reporting structure to expand or collapse in response to the pandemic activities. As more tasks require delegation, more branches can be added to the IMS structure; e.g. school boards and other service providers may be added as required according to the scope of tasking and information dissemination. This provides an effective flow of communication and resource management to all IMS levels.

2.2.1 Pandemic Unified Command

The Pandemic Unified Command (PUC) is comprised of the Medical Officer of Health, who will chair the PUC, the hospital CEOs and the CAOs of the County, the City of Stratford, and the Town of St. Marys. The PUC is supported by the Safety Officer, the Liaison Officer, the Communications Officer, and Administrative Support.

The role of the PUC is to assume responsibility for the overall management of the pandemic event.

The responsibilities of the Pandemic Unified Command are as follows:

- Provide overall authority during pandemic
- Activate pandemic response plan and municipal continuity plans
- Coordinate municipal and health sector response
- Declare local emergencies
- Cancel public events
- Suspend / reduce municipal services
- Monitor activities, services and resources for consistency and adequacy across jurisdiction
- Deliver emergency information and key messaging via spokespersons
- Approve the release of health information to the media and public
- Prioritize and ensure continuity of essential services
- Coordinate with Provincial EOC
- Receive and implement orders/advice/provincial directives
- Ensure the safety of all responders
- Establish a business cycle for updates with all sectors
- Manage sensitive or political issues arising from the incident

2.2.2 Communications Manager

The role of the Communications Manager is to be the point of contact for media and to manage all public information regarding the pandemic. The Communication Officer will also prepare messages and release significant information approved by the PUC. The Perth District Health Unit Communication Manager is the lead for communication but will have a team that consists of health and municipal sector staff.

The responsibilities of the Communication Manager are as follows:

- Prepare messages, gain approval from the PUC and release the information to the public
- Respond to media requests for information
- Monitor the media to ensure that they are accurately reporting the information to the public
- Coordinate media briefings and conferences
- Prepare and brief spokesperson
- Consider website information and updates
- Investigate and manage rumors related to the emergency
- Work closely with the Medical Officer of Health
- Maintain a personal log of all actions taken

The Communication Manager must have certain knowledge and experience related to the incident in order to disseminate information.

It is important that the Communication Manager and designated spokespersons develop and maintain a relationship with the media that is built on trust.

2.2.3 Health and Safety Concerns

Normally in the IMS Structure a Safety Officer is designated to oversee the safety issues surrounding the emergency situation. This structure works well when there is an actual site where safety is an issue such as with tornadoes or fires. Response to pandemic is much different in that there are several sites (hospitals, LTCHs, Municipal Offices, workplaces, schools etc) where health and safety concerns may arise.

Therefore, during a pandemic response the Perth District Health Unit will provide a safety consultation service. Organizations and agencies can call for the most current infection prevention and control recommendations, but will need to have someone designated in their pandemic plans as their Internal Safety Officer. This designated person will then be responsible for ensuring appropriate infection prevention and control measures within their organization or agency. The Health Unit's role will be to keep informed of the most current recommendations and practices.

2.2.4 Liaison Officer

The role of the Liaison Officer is to coordinate with outside agencies and personnel to ensure awareness of the pandemic, maintain links, share information and to clarify roles.

The responsibilities of the Liaison Officer are as follows:

- Establish and maintain formal communications with community agencies and service providers
- Identify contact persons and contact numbers for participating agencies
- Monitor pandemic operations to identify current or potential interagency cooperation needs
- Speak with the authority of the Medical Officer of Health when dealing with other agencies
- Coordinate with outside agencies, services and personnel to ensure they are aware of the incident and confirm their expectations
- Maintain a personal log of all actions taken

2.2.5 Health Sector

Health sector stakeholders such as hospitals, Perth District Health Unit, CCAC, Long Term Care, EMS, and Social Services will activate and operate as per their individual agency emergency plans. However, they will meet regularly with the Medical Officer of Health as per the determined Operation Cycle.

Each health sector agency is responsible for the following:

- Coordinate and manage the health response to the pandemic as per their emergency plans
- Activate Business Continuity Plans accordingly to maintain the essential services they provide
- Identify staffing and resource needs
- Follow the directives given by the Province, the PUC or the MOH
- Assist the PUC to develop Incident Action Plans by determining pandemic incident objectives and priorities as it pertains to their agency
- Maintain communication with the Medical Officer of Health
- Maintain a service log for their agency

2.2.6 Municipal Sector

There will be numerous municipal Emergency Operations Centres (EOC) and Emergency Control Groups (ECG) operating within geographical Perth County. To ensure an efficient and effective response, the PUC will liaise with the local ECGs through the Municipal CAOs.

The local Emergency Control Groups membership may be modified due to members' participation with shared services and their availability.

The Municipal sector is collapsible into a joint Municipal EOC as required, e.g. 2008 James Bay evacuation response.

The Municipal sector is responsible for the following:

- Activate Continuity of Operations accordingly to maintain essential services (i.e. Fire, Police, Public Works, Mortuary Services)
- Support the health sector as required
- Follow the directives given by the Province and the PUC
- Assist the PUC to develop Incident Action Plans by determining objectives and priorities as it pertains to their service
- Identify staffing and resource needs
- Provide support to the Communications Team
- Provide administrative support to the PUC
- Coordinate media and public information releases with the Communications Team
- Maintain a service log for their service

In Section (1) of the Child and Family Services Act, the Paramount purpose is set out as follows:

“... to promote the best interests, protection and well being of children”.

A Children's Aid Society is mandated to carry out its responsibilities under the CFSA. A Children's Aid Society is also charged with additional duties under the act so long as they are consistent with the statement of paramount purpose.

During a pandemic the legal duties of a Children's Aid Society do not alter, nor do the regulations and standards under which they operate. In the event that a parent is incapacitated, and where there is no alternate care provider (relative or close family friend) immediately available, the CAS will ensure that the children's needs are met.

2.3 INCIDENT ACTION PLANS

The Incident Action Plan (IAP) is either an oral or written plan that provides each sector (Health and Municipal) with direction for future actions. These plans include measurable objectives to be achieved (selection of resources, resource assignments and performance monitoring). The IAP is usually developed through verbal briefings or by distributing written updates. The decision to have a written action plan will be made by the PUC.

The implementation of the Incident Action Plan is the responsibility of all of the participating agencies.

2.4 THE OPERATION CYCLE

For clear communication, situation analysis and strategic planning to occur, the health and municipal sectors must meet regularly throughout the pandemic response. This usually takes the form of an Operation Cycle and is called and chaired by the Medical Officer of Health or the Municipal CAOs respectively. The purpose of the Operation Cycle is to periodically gather the sector group members together for information sharing, brain storming, decision making and plan development.

The findings are recorded and reviewed against the response objectives and priorities outlined in the Incident Action Plan (IAP). From the review, operational instructions are issued to address any concerns and requirements. Only the PUC may change response objectives and priorities.

Note: The Pandemic Unified Command will conduct their own operation cycle separately from the sector operations cycles.

2.4.1 Timing of the Operation Cycle

The timing of the operation cycle is the responsibility of the MOH and the CAOs. Depending on the intensity of the operations and the situation, the system may be lengthened or shortened. For example, during the initial stages of an emergency, when information is sketchy, it may be necessary to conduct the process more frequently. In the latter stages of the emergency, the operation cycle may be lengthened.

It is important to set an appropriate time for the operation cycle to run. This will ensure there is sufficient time for the response groups to meet and discuss the response to the incident and to allow time for the emergency support functions to address the priorities and objectives in the created Incident Action Plan.

2.4.2 Meeting Portion of the Operation Cycle

- The MOH or CAOs chair the meeting
 - A member of each sector agency attends
 - Discuss response priorities and objectives. Brainstorm for possible future scenarios/responses
 - Create an Incident Action Plan (IAP) for the cycle
 - MOH or CAOs delegate(s) IAP to the appropriate agency/staff members
 - Each sector agency provides update on their previous IAP items, if required
 - Conduct fast round-the-table updates including review of IAP from previous meeting
 - Decisions to be brief and to the point
 - Set time for next meeting
-
- Adjourn meeting. Agency leads to return to respective teams to discuss IAP for the cycle

2.4.3 Working Portion of the Operation Cycle

- Agency leads meet with respective response teams
- Delegate the response priorities/objectives set out in the IAP from the sector meeting to the teams
- Members of the response teams work at meeting the priorities and objectives
- Agencies provide feedback to MOH or CAOs regarding progress, questions, problems and other issues that might have come up since the last cycle. The MOH/CAO then take(s) these issues to the next PUC meeting to discuss.