

TABLE 3: Contingency plans for surge capacity and employee health for health care providers during outbreak situations*

Surge Capacity

- Establish and maintain an up-to-date emergency communications plan for your facility.
- Develop notification protocols for staff and include 24-hour contact information.
- Prepare a list of emergency contact numbers for all key suppliers and referral hospitals.
- Determine the minimum number of personnel needed to keep the facility open, and develop contingency plans for a staffing shortage (potentially up to 30% in the even of a pandemic).
- Cross-train administrative staff to support clinical activities (e.g., registration).
- Consider recruiting temporary personnel or volunteers (e.g., retired physicians, nurses, or allied health professionals) to assist with both clinical and administrative tasks.
- Anticipate needs and plan to stockpile essential medical materials (e.g., NIOSH-approved N95 respirators and surgical masks, eye protection/face shields, gloves, gowns, soap, hand hygiene products, tissues, cleaning supplies, critical medications, and other essential consumable medical supplies).
- Have contingency agreements in place with more than one supplier to ensure delivery.
- Develop strategies to increase patient care capacity at the height of the pandemic. For example, plan to:
 - Increase hours of operation and stagger shifts.
 - Coordinate schedules with other practices based on prearranged emergency affiliations.

- Cancel non-essential visits (e.g., annual physicals or routine check-ups). If possible, conduct routine follow-up by telephone and e-mail.
- Set up a system for patient triage by telephone and e-mail so that office visits are limited to those medically necessary to treat either influenza or other acute conditions. Consider adding a recorded message to your practice's main telephone number to help provide general guidance for patients regarding where they should seek care.
- Consider how to provide uninterrupted care for patients who have chronic illnesses, or who are undergoing treatment regimens that cannot be halted. You will also need to minimize risk of exposure for these patients when they are at your clinics.
- Prepare security procedures to control access to your facility if overwhelming numbers of patients present for care.

Employee Health

- Offer a liberal/non-punitive sick leave policy to ensure that ill staff and staff with ill household members stay home. Consider offering pay advances or additional sick leave days.
- Instruct employees to call in sick if they develop fever and/or respiratory symptoms. In addition, assign a staff member(s) to screen other staff for symptoms as they arrive each day, before they begin work.
- Establish a time frame for when ill personnel may return to work
- Identify personnel at increased risk for influenza complications (e.g., pregnant or immunocompromised staff) and consider placing them on administrative leave or altering their work location or duties to avoid direct patient contact
- Protect employees whenever possible by using physical barriers (e.g., clear plastic sneeze guards).
- Allow non-clinical, administrative staff (e.g., bookkeepers) to telecommute from home.

- Support family emergency care plans, especially if school and group daycare closures are recommended to decrease community transmission.

*Adapted from NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, [City Health Information](#) 2007; 26(6):37-46.