

Outbreak, Epidemic and Pandemic Response Plan

August 2009

Introduction

This Outbreak, Epidemic and Pandemic Response Plan (OEPRP) is a sub-plan of the Trent University Emergency Management Plan (EMP) designed to address the unique requirements of the university when the campus is experiencing increased incidence of a communicable disease. This Plan details response to three levels of incidence: outbreak, epidemic and pandemic.

Definitions:

Outbreak:

An outbreak is typically defined as an increased incidence, above the normal experience, of an infectious disease process within an institution. Outbreaks may include, but are not limited to, respiratory symptoms and gastrointestinal symptoms. The existence of an outbreak is confirmed by the local Medical Officer of Health, based on data collection and observation.

Epidemic:

An epidemic is essentially an outbreak that involves a community or region, that is, increased occurrence as noted above but not confined to one institution.

Pandemic:

A pandemic is an extreme public health emergency and occurs when there is a global disease outbreak, affecting or with the potential to affect, countries throughout the world.

Governance

Trent University retains governance of university academics and operations except when superseded by the legal authority of the municipal or provincial government.

Under the Health Protection and Promotion Act (HPPA) and the Health Systems Improvements Act of 2007, the *Medical Officer of Health (MOH)* for Peterborough City and County has the authority to implement public health measures including

- Public education – including hand hygiene, cough etiquette, importance of fresh air, how to use masks, social distancing and influenza care.
- Travel restrictions – including travel advisories, voluntary foreign travel restrictions, closing borders and reducing transit use.
- Case management – including voluntary isolation, self care, anti-virals and compliance monitoring.
- Contact management – including education, voluntary and modified quarantine and compliance monitoring.

- Infection prevention and control measures, social distancing [Social distancing – workplace infection prevention and control, social distancing by operational changes in a university setting (distance learning, cohorting residents, work from home) and restricting public gatherings] and campus closures.

The College of Nurses of Ontario (CNO) retains professional and regulatory authority over the practice of Registered Nurses, including those employed at Trent. Nursing students are not CNO registrants and therefore not subject to its authority.

Purpose

The purpose of this plan is to assist Trent University in responding to a communicable disease outbreak to the best of our ability in a manner that supports:

1. PCCHU and the MOH by minimizing serious illness and overall death and minimizing social disruption.
2. The students, faculty and staff of Trent University by the continuation or re-initiation of the academic program and support services.
3. The Board of Governors by minimizing the disruption and negative impact of an epidemic or pandemic on campus educational, social and economic operations and outcomes.
4. COU and CAUBO by taking mitigating action that is consistent with best practices within the Canadian and Ontario university community.

The Emergency Management Plan assumes an emergency that significantly disrupts university operations and provides a planning framework to restore university operations as quickly as possible. Most emergencies affect university infrastructure. However, the OEPRP recognizes that an epidemic or pandemic will primarily affect the availability of human resources. This may force the university to reduce the level of operations to core functions and to possibly even cease operations for extended periods.

The OEPRP is consistent with the EMP and the pandemic plans of both the Peterborough Regional Health Centre (PRHC) and the Peterborough County-City Health Unit (PCCHU) and is structured on the Incident Management System (IMS) in use in Ontario.

For regional consistency, the OEPRP will follow the ethical planning principles articulated in the PRHC Pandemic Plan, adapted to Trent. These principles are:

- Protect and promote the health of the Trent community.
- Ensure equity and distributive justice.
- Respect the inherent dignity of all persons.
- Use the least restrictive measures consistent with the recommendations of the Medical Officer of Health.
- Optimize the risk/benefit ratio.
- Work with transparency and accountability.

Trent also adopts the *Ontario Health Plan for an Influenza Pandemic* approach which is:

- Be ready – plan for infectious disease outbreak, epidemic and pandemic.
- Be watchful – conduct surveillance when requested by the PCCHU.
- Be decisive – manage the spread quickly and effectively by implementing public health measures as recommended by the PCCHU and the Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC).
- Be transparent – communicate with key stakeholders and the Trent community.

Outbreak

Planning Assumptions

- The outbreak is confined to one residence or to one site (i.e. Peterborough or Oshawa but not both) of Trent University.
- The outbreak involves an increased incidence of symptoms reflective of an infectious disease.
- The outbreak is confirmed by the Peterborough County City Health Unit.
- The outbreak is anticipated to be three to ten days in length.
- Housekeeping staff will have had the appropriate training, will have available the appropriate personal protective equipment and will be assigned in increased numbers to ensure 24/7 coverage.
- Food services staff will have had the appropriate training, will have available the appropriate personal protective equipment and will be assigned in increased numbers to ensure 24/7 coverage.
- Increased food supplies, and specifically fluids, will be ordered and made available on a 24/7 basis.
- Specific precautions and personal protective equipment required will be dependent upon the type of disease but at a minimum, universal precautions will be required.

Operational Management of an Outbreak at Trent University:

An outbreak management team will be appointed by the EOCG or EOCG Director to oversee the response to the outbreak. It is recommended that membership on that team include representatives from each of:

- Communications
- Food Services
- Health Services
- Housekeeping
- Housing (if students are in residence)
- Conference Services (during the conference season)
- Peterborough County City Health Unit
- Risk Management
- School of Nursing
- Student Services

Clerical support will be required for the outbreak management team. Additional resource personnel will be added as appropriate.

Students, faculty and staff who are symptomatic will be asked to remain at home, or in their residence room if they are students in residence, limiting to the extent practicable all contact with other members of the university and the general public.

Subject to consultation with PCCHU, work, classes and placement for asymptomatic employees and students will continue as scheduled. **Exception:** Students who are in practice settings where they are working with vulnerable people may be directed not to attend such placements during an outbreak at Trent. In such cases, they will be provided the opportunity to make up missed practice opportunities following the end of the outbreak. This may require attendance beyond the school year.

Epidemic

Planning Assumptions

- The epidemic is at least Peterborough wide, possibly province or even country wide, affecting a larger than usual number of individuals both on and off campus.
- The epidemic involves an increased incidence of symptoms reflective of an infectious disease.
- The epidemic is confirmed by the Peterborough County City Health Unit.
- The length of the epidemic will be dependent on the disease process involved, however a typical range for an epidemic is 4 to 12 weeks.
- Housekeeping staff will have had the appropriate training, will have available the appropriate personal protective equipment and will be assigned in increased numbers to ensure 24/7 coverage.
- Food services staff will have had the appropriate training, will have available the appropriate personal protective equipment and will be assigned in increased numbers to ensure 24/7 coverage.
- Increased food supplies, and specifically fluids, will be ordered and made available on a 24/7 basis.
- Specific precautions and personal protective equipment required will be dependent upon the type of disease but at a minimum, universal precautions will be required.

Operational Management of an Epidemic at Trent University:

An epidemic management team will be appointed by the EOCG or EOCG Director to oversee the response to the outbreak. It is recommended that membership on that team include representatives from each of:

Communications
Food Services
Health Services
Housekeeping

Housing (if there are students in residence)
Conference Services (in conference season)
Peterborough County City Health Unit
Risk Management
School of Nursing
Student Services

Clerical support will be required for the outbreak management team. Additional consultants will be added as appropriate.

Students, faculty and staff who are symptomatic will be directed to remain at home, or in their residence room if they are students in residence, limiting to the extent practicable all contact with other members of the university and the general public.

Subject to consultation with the Peterborough County City Health Unit, classes, mid-terms, exams and placement activities may be cancelled for the duration of the epidemic. **Note:** Students who are in practice settings where they are working with vulnerable people (young, old, frail) may be directed not to attend such placements during an epidemic.

Academic departmental plans must address alternative provision of services during an extended period of class cancellation as well as remedial options for students who have not been able to complete course work or placements, mid-terms or exams. Administrative departmental plans will address business continuity issues such as application of university policies, financial recovery and impact on the university's reputation.

Students, faculty and staff will receive communication regarding the outbreak by various means (email, posters, web site, Emergency Communication System, and briefings) and will be advised on:

- Signs and symptoms;
- Preventative techniques and treatments available;
- Assessment locations;
- Treatment locations;
- Self Care;
- Changes to university operations.

Pandemic

Planning Assumptions

- A pandemic event will last up to 18 months; in two or more waves of approximately eight to twelve weeks in duration. The second wave will follow 3 -9 months after the first and likely be more serious.
- 20 – 60% of students and employees may be affected at any one time.

- Hospitalization and death rates will vary depending on the severity of the disease;
- Full normal operations of the University will not be able to be maintained throughout the pandemic period.
- Ontario may have little lead time once a pandemic is declared by the World Health Organization.
- Many members of the Trent community travel internationally, which could contribute to the speed with which a pandemic reaches Trent and Peterborough.
- Persons recovering from the illness will likely be immune during subsequent waves.
- Vaccines will not likely be available for four to six months after the initial outbreak.
- Everyone may require two doses of the vaccine to produce immunity. When enough vaccine becomes available public health units will organize vaccination clinics, prioritized on the basis of risk.

Pandemic Assessment

The World Health Organization (WHO) identifies the following pandemic periods and phases:

1. *Inter -Pandemic*
 - a. Phase 1. No new animal viruses have been detected in humans.
 - b. Phase 2. A circulating animal influenza virus is known to have caused infection in humans.
2. *Alert*
 - a. Phase 3. Human infections with a new sub-type, but no human to human spread, or rare instances of close contact spread.
 - b. Phase 4. Sustained community level outbreaks caused by human to human transmission.
 - c. Phase 5. Sustained community level outbreaks caused by human to human transmission in two countries in one WHO region.
3. *Pandemic*
 - a. Phase 6. Phase 5 criteria plus community level outbreaks in at least one other country in a different WHO region.

Key Activities

Key Activities of the OEPRP will be related to the WHO periods and phases and any public health measures recommended by the MOH. As well, the following two additional planning periods have been added:

- Interim periods between waves of infection
- A post-epidemic or pandemic business recovery period

Key activities are attached, indicating the department or office responsible for each activity.

Inter-Pandemic (normal operations)

Activity	Responsible Department(s)
Hygiene and personal emergency education for all members of the Trent community. Facilitate annual flu vaccinations.	Student Health Services Risk Management Department
Regular review and update of OEPRP	Emergency Planning Committee
Identify employees with transferable skills and maintain up to date list. Emphasis on health care, personal care and counselling skills.	Human Resources All Departments
Risk and liability assessment of enrolment and financial impact	Risk Management Department Financial Services
Develop absenteeism and academic credit/withdrawal policies specific to pandemic	Human Resources Registrar's Office
Develop alternative student transportation or academic delivery protocol	VP Academic Office of Student Affairs Trent International Program
Develop pandemic communication plan (internal and external). This includes establishment of surge telephone and email response capabilities & accessibility.	Marketing and Communications Information Technology
Develop housing plan to care for international, residence and off campus students in the event of travel restrictions that includes provision of essential services.	Housing Services Office of Student Affairs Trent International Program
Develop service agreements for the continued provision of essential services such as hazardous waste removal in a pandemic, or identify a temporary alternative.	All Departments
Complete Departmental Business Continuity and Emergency Response Plans using the OEPRP planning tools to identify core operations, critical services and key personnel.	All Departments
Develop RN redeployment and student volunteer plan for Nursing School.	Director of Nursing
Test Plans	Emergency Planning Committee

Alert

Key Activity	Responsible Department(s)
Review and update all related plans, initiate	Emergency Planning Committee

communications with COU and CAUBO, keep EOCG up to date	Departments
At Alert level 5, appoint Incident Commander	EOCG
Determine Emergency Response Team (health services, nursing, IT, Housing)	Incident Commander
Health surveillance (if requested by PCCHU); identify any infected individuals and report cases to PCCHU	Student Health Services Human Resources Housing
Enhanced education and communication about infection, prevention and response	Student Health Services Housing Risk Management Department Marketing and Communications
Monitoring of community response	Emergency Planning Committee
Preliminary precautions to reduce potential transmission e.g. hand sanitizers, N95 masks, expand annual flu clinics, identify health monitoring/assessment locations, building access restrictions	Health and Safety Officer
Review absenteeism and academic policies and remind employees and students of their provisions and options.	Human Resources Registrar's office
Coordinate communications plan with Incident Commander.	Marketing and Communications Information Technology Incident Commander
Develop employee and student screening tool and policy	Human Resources Student Affairs, RO
Establish ongoing dialogue with bargaining groups	Human Resources Incident Commander
Develop alternative service delivery strategies for core operations, critical services and key personnel	All departments

Pandemic (First Wave of illness)

Key Activities	Responsible Department(s)
Convene virtual EOCG and initiate communications with COU, CAUBO, and PCCHU. Determine timings and extent of operational reductions up to and including university closure.	Incident Commander EOCG
Initiate discussion with MTCU and COU regarding emergency funding	EOCG Director of Finance
Determine operating cycle, if a representative	Incident Commander

should be sent to the Peterborough Emergency Operations Centre	
Implement communications plan, including regular media briefings and internal communications and use to the Peterborough Information Centre (PIC).	Marketing and Communications Information Technology Incident Commander
Implement student care plan	Office of Student Affairs
When requested by PCCHU, initiate daily data collection for absenteeism (employees and students), infection, incidents and complaints, PCCHU status reports	EOCG Scribe
Implement any MOH recommended public health measures as warranted by further limiting building or campus access, stopping services or activities, restricting assemblies etc.	Incident Commander
Implement alternative transportation plan when and if warranted.	Office of Student Affairs
Redeploy and equip staff as required to cover essential services.	Human Resources Departments
Determine if particular buildings should be closed due to staff shortages	EOCG Incident Commander
Maintain close liaison with PCCHU and assist in organizing the distribution of vaccines and anti-virals to the Trent community	EOCG Student Health Nursing

Pandemic Interim Period(s)

Key Activities	Responsible Department(s)
Replenish supplies if possible	All departments
Identify employees who are likely immune and determine anticipated absentee rates for next wave	Human Resources
Predict enrolment and financial models.	VP Academic Financial Services
Review plan and adjust for lessons learned in first wave.	EOCG and Emergency Planning Committee
Implement communications strategy for all stakeholders to advise of University's planned way ahead	Marketing and Communications

Take any staff relations action required including grief counselling for employees and students.	Human Resources Student Counselling
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Post Pandemic

Key Activities	Responsible Department(s)
Determine and communicate return to full operations plan and timings	EOCG Marketing and Communications
Prioritize recovery needs i.e. funding, staff, infrastructure, psycho-social services.	EOCG
Replenish supplies.	All departments
Reports to PCCHU, MTCU etc	EOCG
Conduct in-depth lessons-learned analysis including survey of Trent community re impact, financial impact, enrolment impact, legal impact, reputational impact, personnel impact.	Emergency Planning Committee
Debrief, evaluation and revision of plan and deactivate EOCG and Pandemic Management Team	Emergency Planning Committee EOCG
Thank you and acknowledgement of community support, losses and changes.	Marketing and Communications

Education and Training

Education and training in advance of and during an outbreak, epidemic or pandemic are vital to reducing panic, absenteeism and infection by providing factual information, simple hygiene techniques and avoiding hyperbole and speculation.

Messages should be repeated frequently in a variety of formats. Essential components are:

- A short, plain language explanation of the communicable disease status and characteristics.
- Update the message as more information becomes available.
- Provide a short, practical list of steps that anyone can take to reduce exposure risk.
- Emphasize the importance of hand washing, hand sanitizer, covering coughs and sneezes, avoiding face touching, avoiding casual physical contact, maintaining a clean environment, staying home when ill, and maintaining a meter of distance from anyone coughing or sneezing.

- Explain how, why, where and when to put on and dispose of a surgical mask and gloves. Provide training to all front line staff.
- Tell people what they can do to help themselves if they become ill and advise persons to go home when they develop symptoms and remain there until they are symptom free (at least 5 days).

Supplies

Surgical masks are sufficient to control transmission by cough or sneeze and are recommended for symptomatic persons who must go into public areas. Front line personnel who have been fit tested and trained within the past two years may be required to wear N95 masks. Masks, gowns and gloves are considered contaminated after a single use and should be discarded. Sufficient biological waste disposal containers will be required. Custodial staff are to wear gloves while cleaning and encouraged to wash their hands frequently. Hand sanitizers have been installed all around campus. Sufficient refills and portable bottles of sanitizer to last for an academic year are to be stockpiled.

Anti-viral drugs and vaccines, when available, will be allocated by the Ministry of Health and be based on the then current treatment priorities and available supplies. Trent University will not procure stockpiles of anti-viral drugs, but will encourage maximum participation in flu clinics on campus.

Human Resources Plan

The Human Resources departmental plan will address the maintenance of adequate staffing levels to maintain essential and core services as identified in Departmental Emergency Plans.

Communications Plan

The Marketing and Communications Department is responsible to adapt the Emergency Communications Plan to a communicable disease situation.

Employee and Student Responsibilities

Employees are responsible to:

- Contact their supervisor if symptomatic and follow the supervisor's directions.
- If not symptomatic, attend work as normal. Advise their supervisor if they require time off for family requirements.
- If the university is closed, report to their supervisor before leaving and remain off campus unless directed otherwise. Keep in contact with the university throughout the closure and be available to attend work if required.
- When the university reopens, attend work as directed.

Students are responsible to:

- Stay off campus or in their residence room if symptomatic.
- If the university closes, stay off campus but keep in touch via the web, TV or radio and return when classes resume.