



Name:	Pandemic Policy
Domain:	Administrative and Fiscal
Location:	Staff Website
Policy Sponsor:	VP organizational strategy and effectiveness
Date Approved:	03/13/2020
Approval Process:	Executive
Revision Date(s):	
Review Schedule:	Every 4 years

1. Introduction

An outbreak of a pandemic can have severe consequences on the health of employees and participants. Ranch Ehrlo Society is committed to the safety and well-being of our employees and the safety and continued service to participants in the event of a pandemic.

2. Policy Rationale

The *Pandemic Policy* provides a framework to address emergent concerns and develop action plans in the event of a pandemic. The policy supports advance planning and preparedness that are critical in mitigating the impact of a pandemic on the organization, employees and participants. The agency also has previously developed policies which address related concerns: *Safety and Emergency Measures* and *Communicable Diseases and Universal Precautions*.

3. Scope

This policy applies to all employees and programs of Ranch Ehrlo Society.

4. Definitions

Pandemic: an outbreak of a disease that occurs over a wide geographical area and effects a high proportion of the population.

5. Policy Statement

The agency engages in advance planning, preparedness and the development of action plans to mitigate the impact on the organization, employees and participants of a pandemic.

The President/CEO and/or designate declares the agency is initiating the agency *Pandemic Policy* and agency protocols.

5.1 Pandemic Committee



In the event of the risk of a pandemic outbreak, a pandemic response committee is organized to oversee the agency's preparedness and action plans.

Key responsibilities of the committee include:

- a. Assess the extent of the pandemic and its potential impact on agency operations, employees and the care of participants;
- b. Decide which elements of pandemic preparedness and planning to activate;
- c. Ensure processes in place for effective communication to employees, parents, key stakeholders and external organizations regarding notifications, responsibilities and implementation of action plans;
- d. Ensure support for essential functions to ensure continuity in vital operations, safety of employees and the care of participants.

The committee is comprised of members of the executive committee and others as required.

5.2 Notice of Pandemic Outbreak/Plan

All internal and external stakeholders are promptly notified about the change in operations due to a pandemic. This notice will be communicated clearly and will include information about the next steps of action and the anticipated length of time. The notice will be communicated on the staff website and distributed through email and cascading communication through managers.

5.3 Education for Participants and Employees

- a. Agency-wide training occurs in all programs and departments. An overview training session about pandemic preparedness will be provided to all agency personnel in supervisory positions. All agency supervisors will assume responsibility for ensuring that employees in their areas have received educational material and continue to receive information on an ongoing basis.
- b. Education and information on effective respiratory and hand hygiene practices are provided to participants and employees. Communication strategies regarding the preferred methods to cover coughs or sneezes and best practices for hand hygiene for both employees and participants include posters, individualized and group instruction, and information posted on Ranch Ehrlo Society's website from health organizations.

5.4 Travel Restrictions

The Pandemic Committee may determine restrictions on travel for participants and employee work related travel.



Participants travelling to their home communities or family/community members travelling to the agency may be required to reschedule their visits until the pandemic risk is decreased. Participants who are ill while in our program do not travel to other communities until the active period of infection has passed.

Any work-related out of province travel is restricted on a case-by-case basis. Work travel plans are discussed in advance with supervisors and are approved by the appropriate vice president.

Employees are asked to communicate any personal travel plans with their supervisor. Employees departing for personal travel to or returning from an active risk area are required to self-isolate for 14 days. Where the work functions cannot be performed during self-isolation, the employee may not be eligible for benefits. In some cases, alternate arrangements may be developed with employee supervisors (e.g. working from home or taking time off). A resource for some identified high-risk areas can be found on the Government of Canada website [here](#).

5.5 Employee Expectations

a. Attendance

If an employee feels ill or is displaying any of the following symptoms: fever, a dry cough, aches and pains, a runny nose, sore throat, diarrhea, nausea, or nasal congestion they should stay home until they have recovered from the infectious component of their illness. Coming to work compromises the safety of others in the organization and any employee who reports to work when ill will be sent home.

All employees are expected to abide by the regular attendance guidelines and leave policies (See *Sick Leave Policy & Sick Leave Procedures*).

b. Cleaning & Hygiene

Effective cleaning and respiratory and hand hygiene are considered a fundamental part of disease control for pandemic situations. Employees cooperate with the efforts made by the organization to reduce transmission by maintaining unit cleaning/sanitization and basic hygiene practices, such as washing hands with warm, soapy water, covering the mouth with tissues when sneezing and safely discarding any tissues used.

During peak times of active infectious illness, increased cleaning/sanitization regimens for all common areas, counters, washrooms, desktops, door handles, railings, and other hard surfaces are undertaken. Employees are also encouraged to use the alcohol-based hand sanitizers installed in the workplace (See *Communicable Diseases and Universal Precautions Policy*).

c. Social Distancing

The agency implements social distancing guidelines for employees to reduce the risk of infection within the workplace (See Appendix A: Levels of Agency Alert during a





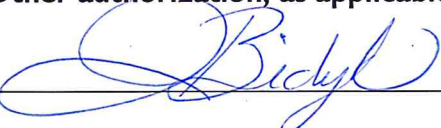
Pandemic). The agency may also ask employees to relocate to alternative work locations to reduce risks of the infection spreading.

5.6 Essential Services

Ranch Ehrlo Society determines essential functions and critical services to the agency that are maintained in order to ensure core operations, safety, and continuity of care during and after a pandemic period. Support to these functions and critical services is a high priority to provide dedicated support to the organization. Essential functions and critical services include continued service to participants residing in agency programs, core IT & network services, and core finance and administrative services.

If the residential programs are unable to sufficiently staff their programs due to staff illness, then staff from other program and/or administrative areas will be redeployed and utilized to provide care to participants. These non-residential programs offer limited services while their staff will work with the residential programs to remain open. All staff members within non-residential programs are informed that they may be required to provide support to residential programs. A list of “available” staff is developed.

Authorization

Policy sponsor: 	Date: Mar 13/2020
Other authorization, as applicable: 	Date: Mar 18/20
Other authorization, as applicable: 	Date: Mar 13/2020



Appendix A: Levels of Agency Alert during a Pandemic

A key strategy for pandemic preparedness is early and timely identification of an escalation in the numbers of staff or residents who are exhibiting symptoms of infectious influenza. This early identification assists in determining the ability of the organization to continue to provide adequate service to residents. Using the following three-level system of alert, senior managers can quickly adjust staffing levels to determine when emergency plans need to be put into place. The President/CEO and/or designate declares that the agency is initiating the agency *Pandemic Policy* and agency protocols.

Pre-pandemic Alert Level - No known reported cases in the province but there are confirmed small cluster(s) throughout the country and a risk of a pandemic outbreak.

Level One – Illness is present in the organization and staff absences are consistent with the monthly average statistics. Most residential and educational programs have full-time trained additional staffing resources to meet these needs with little or no difficulty.

Level Two – The number of cases of employee and resident illness increases, and the agency fully utilizes its casual pool as well as its fully trained full-time additional residential and educational resources. This level of alert requires program directors/principals to ensure that the casual employees working within their program/education areas are available and receiving regular updates. Some situations will require the authorization of overtime for full-time employees who are covering off shifts in the various programs.

Level Three – The number of cases of illness is causing some programs to experience significant difficulty in filling shifts open as a result of infectious influenza. Program supervisors may be required to fill shifts; other employees with appropriate experience will be called in to fill shifts as well; and finally, the agency will adopt its summer camping model for overtime where employees are requested to work for longer periods of time.