



University of Pittsburgh

Facilitating an Effective Risk Mitigation and Exposure Response Plan for Risk Group 3 Pathogens in a University Environment

University of Pittsburgh
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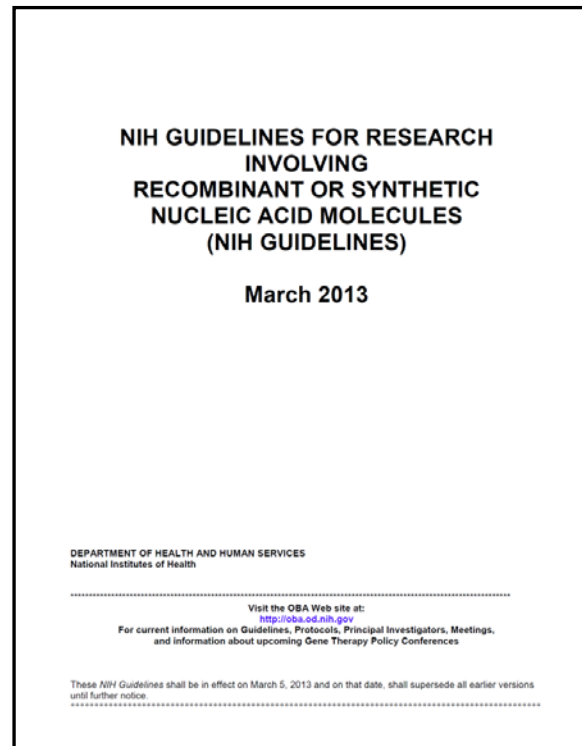
Existing Program

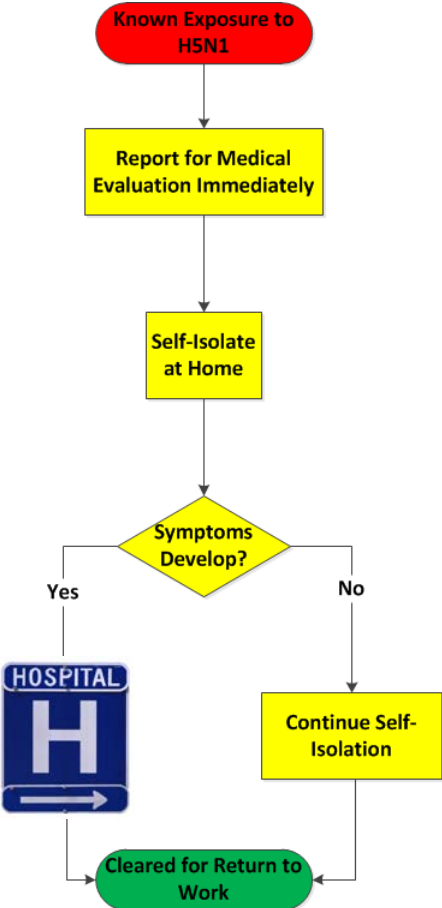
- Registered facilities for work with Select Agents
 - University Guidance for BSL-3/ABSL-3 Exposures
 - Established relationship with University of Pittsburgh Medical Center (UPMC) for emergency treatment and respiratory isolation
 - Drills with City of Pittsburgh emergency services
 - Local public health authority actively involved in research program



What Triggered In Depth Review?

- Research proposals to generate recombinant influenza viruses containing the HA gene from:
 - Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza H5N1 (***HPAI H5N1***),
or
 - Non-contemporary strains of H2N2 (***H2N2 (1957-1968)***)







What Were Your Personnel Exposed To?!?

- Symptomatic patient with known HPAI H5N1 exposure
- Renegotiate with UPMC Infection Control, Emergency, and Infectious Disease Departments





- Known exposure to H2N2 (1957-1968)
 - Immediate respiratory isolation
- Can't admit a patient without symptoms
 - Health department recommend admission and work with Employee Health for appropriate transport of patient
 - Coordinate admission via Infectious Diseases
 - Admit directly to isolation; bypass emergency department





How Much Could Isolation Cost?!?

- Who pays the hospital bill when employee doesn't develop symptoms and testing reveals no evidence of infection with research strain?
 - Worker's Compensation?
 - Employee's health insurance?



How Much Could Isolation Cost?!?

- **Estimated cost per day = \$10,000 - \$20,000**
- Consulted with Human Resources, Risk Management, Office of General Counsel
 - Symptomatic → Worker's Compensation
 - Asymptomatic/no evidence of infection → University and/or employee's department



Will I Still Get Paid?

- Sick time vs. paid leave vs. unpaid leave
 - Disincentive to report potential exposures
 - Disincentive to comply with self-isolation procedures
- Consulted with Human Resources and stakeholder departments
 - Asymptomatic → Paid, approved leave of absence
 - Develop symptoms → Sick time and short term disability program applies



What Does Self-Isolation at Home Mean?

- Local health authority recommended development of self-isolation guidelines for employees
 - Based upon CDC and PA Department of Health recommendations for caring for a loved one who has the flu



www.cdc.gov/flu/homecare



Who Will Check On Me?

- Employee Health Services to contact employee via telephone at least once per day
- If symptoms develop, Employee Health Services will:
 - Provide in-home medical evaluation
 - Coordinate transportation and hospital admission



Why Is Seasonal Flu Vaccine Required?

- The University's required vaccination program did not require seasonal flu vaccine for work with HPAI H5N1 due to lack of strain-specific protection
 - Policy re-visited and consensus to agree to NIH Guidelines vaccine requirement



How Should We Communicate New Requirements?

- EH&S sponsored Town Hall meeting
 - Shared guidelines prior to meeting
 - High potential impact for personal life of employee



Have Our Employees Fully Considered Potential Impact?

- Questions raised showed that employees had not fully considered or planned for actual requirements of a potential exposure
 - Self-isolate at home
 - Self-isolate away from home
 - Immediate respiratory isolation in hospital



Personal Emergency Preparedness

- Be proactive!
 - Make arrangements for emergency family care
 - Use University Employee Assistance Programs to help with planning
 - Keep supervisors informed of life events that could impact your ability to continue current work



How Can We Ensure Personnel Are Fully Aware of Impact?

- Approved vaccination informed consent forms
 - Develop accompanying research informed consent form
 - Review and renew all informed consent forms annually during visit to Employee Health Services for required seasonal influenza vaccination

University of Pittsburgh
**Informed Consent for Individuals Involved in Research
with Highly Pathogenic Avian Influenza H5N1**

Print Name _____ 2P Number _____

I understand that due to my occupational exposure to H5N1 influenza virus that I may be at risk of acquiring a serious infection. This infection could be fatal and/or have potential public health consequences. Due to the potential consequences associated with infection, specific control measures are required by Federal, Allegheny County Health Department and/or University guidelines in the event that I have a known exposure to H5N1 influenza in the research environment.

I have read and understand the University of Pittsburgh Standard Operating Procedures for H5N1 influenza. I understand that in the event of a known exposure to H5N1 influenza in the research environment that I may be required by Federal, Allegheny Health Department and/or University guidelines to self-isolate from the general public until infection has been ruled out.

I further understand that if flu-like symptoms develop within 10 days of a known exposure (as determined by University EH&S under the Standard Operating Procedures) to H5N1 influenza in the research environment that I am required by Federal, Allegheny County Health Department and/or University guidelines to report the symptoms immediately to my supervisor and Employee Health Services; and that isolation in a medical facility will occur until H5N1 or other infection of concern is ruled out by appropriate testing.

I acknowledge and accept these conditions for working with H5N1 influenza virus at the University of Pittsburgh.

Signature to ACCEPT _____ Date _____

OR, I cannot accept the conditions as described above. I understand that by declining to accept these conditions, my supervisor and/or investigator will be notified of my restriction from handling H5N1 influenza at the University of Pittsburgh.

Signature of DECLINATION _____ Date _____



Lessons Learned

- You already have good existing plans...but...
- Engage all the potential stakeholders
 - Human resources
 - Office of General Counsel
 - Local health authority
- Review stakeholders periodically
- Drill your existing plans down to another layer of detail
 - Tabletops, drills, and exercises should include isolation
 - Explain and consider the ramifications of being admitted to the hospital for 3-7 days



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