

## **Preparing for an Influenza Pandemic**

### **Presenter(s)**

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### **Abstract Text**

The H<sub>5</sub>N<sub>1</sub>, or Avian Influenza virus has been the source of 200 human infections with over half of those infected dying. Some medical historians have compared the virus to the Spanish Influenza of 1918 which resulted in over 650,000 U.S. deaths. According to the Centers for Disease Control, it is not an “if”, but a “when” the virus will infect by human to human transmission. Once the virus becomes capable of sustained human to human transmission the world will suffer another pandemic that could be very similar to the Spanish Flu.

The University of Louisville has been working both independently and in collaboration with other universities to develop a response matrix if the Avian Influenza does become a pandemic. This matrix is based on preparations and actions that are to be undertaken at different trigger points in the infection rates and status of the disease.

The Spanish influenza killed more Americans than any war in our history. On the U of L campus alone, CDC projection rates indicate that over 8,000 of our faculty, staff and students will become infected and 1,000 will die. The University closed for over a month in 1918 and the expectation is that if the bird flu strikes, the University will again have to suspend operations. Unless we are prepared to weather the viral storm, the potential is there to impact universities more adversely than Hurricane Katrina.

Participants should expect to increase the knowledge regarding influenza pandemic planning and the unusual components of this type of emergency. They will also learn the emergency procedures that the University of Louisville plans to implement during a pandemic via a response matrix that has been developed for the University.

### **Presenter Bio(s)**

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