

ST. ANDREW LUTHERAN CHURCH
Infection Prevention Plan
October 2009

Prompted by an expected H1N1 Influenza outbreak this fall and winter, the Health Ministry Team, in collaboration with the Pastors and congregation leadership, is recommending this Infection Prevention Plan. A major concern throughout this plan is to protect those who are vulnerable to serious or life-threatening complications from influenza.

PLAN OVERVIEW AND KEY POINTS

The St. Andrew Infection Prevention plan includes three levels of prevention along with implementation recommendations for each level.

1. The levels of prevention are Primary, Secondary and Tertiary.
 - a. Primary prevention is an ever ready state of prevention that should be present at all times.
 - b. The level of prevention needed will be based on information from state and local health authorities related to the status of H1N1 influenza in our community.
 - c. In general, as the level of prevention needed rises, the actions recommended to prevent the spread of infection increase while the amount of personal contact decreases.
 - d. At the level of Tertiary Prevention, worship services, preschool and face-to-face meetings and gatherings will be cancelled.
2. The decision to move from one level to another will be determined by the Pastors and congregation leadership, in collaboration with the Health Ministry Team.
3. As the level of prevention rises, communication to the congregation will accelerate in frequency and in use of multiple media.

In the following pages, each prevention level and related implementation recommendations are described in detail.

The content of this plan was gleaned in part from information received from Northwest Parish Nurse Ministries and the ELCA, including the document "Worship in Times of Public Health Concerns" issued April 30, 2009 by the ELCA.

For ongoing updates and more information, go to the following websites:

www.cdc.gov

www.sccgov.org

www.flu.oregon.gov

This plan was created by the St. Andrew Health ministry team in collaboration with the Pastors and with approval of the Congregation Council. For questions, contact the Pastors or the Health Ministry Team:

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PRIMARY PREVENTION

PRIMARY PREVENTION is the first defense against infection. It focuses on each person's responsibility to maintain his or her health and to practice general infection principles every day whether or not the threat of influenza exists.

Primary Prevention practices include:

- ◆ Washing your hands frequently and thoroughly with soap and water, especially after you cough or sneeze. Alternatively, alcohol-based hand cleansers may be used.
- ◆ Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze; throw the tissue away after use. If tissues are not readily available, cough or sneeze into your sleeve.
- ◆ Avoid touching your eyes, nose, or mouth because these are entry points for the virus.
- ◆ Try to avoid close contact with sick people.
- ◆ If you get sick, stay home and limit contact with others to keep from infecting them.
 - Symptoms of flu (seasonal and H1N1) are fever, cough and sore throat, lack of appetite, runny nose, body aches and chills. Some people also experience nausea, vomiting and diarrhea.
 - Remain home until you are free from symptoms for at least 24 hours.
 - Note: You should be fever free (100 degrees or less) without use of fever reducing medications (ex, Tylenol or Advil).
- ◆ If you are concerned about giving or receiving infections, feel free to bow when sharing the peace or greeting other congregants.
- ◆ Get your seasonal, and/or H1N1, flu vaccination if you fall into one of the categories for which the vaccination is recommended.

The implementation recommendations for Primary Prevention include:

- ◆ Periodic distribution of user-friendly information about Primary Prevention using common Health Ministry education methods, such as, Pulse articles, Health Fair tables, One-to-one counseling, and adult forums.
- ◆ Assure hand washing supplies are conveniently located throughout the church, especially in restrooms, kitchens, and other high use areas.
- ◆ Maintain regular cleaning of high touch areas, such as, restrooms, kitchens, door knobs, telephones, computer key boards, etc.
- ◆ Assure those assisting with worship and/or preparing or serving food are especially mindful of Primary Prevention practices.

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SECONDARY and TERTIARY PREVENTION

The decision to activate Secondary Prevention or Tertiary Prevention will be made by our Pastors and leadership in consultation with the Health Ministry Team as indicated by the situation in our community and the advice of local and state health officials.

SECONDARY PREVENTION will be activated when H1N1 influenza is highly visible in our community and our state health officials are recommending additional precautions.

Secondary Prevention practices include:

- ◆ Assure meticulous attention to Primary Prevention, especially staying home if you are ill.
- ◆ Assure your home is adequately supplied in the event your household becomes infected.
- ◆ Limit touch during our time together. For example, only use bows and other non-touch interactions during the Passing of the Peace and while greeting each other.
- ◆ Consistent with guidance from the ELCA, communion will be distributed using only one element, the bread.
 - Feel free to opt out of communion if you are concerned about yourself or others.
- ◆ Read updates as they appear in weekly bulletins, e-mails, Pulse articles, and on the St. Andrew website.

The implementation recommendations for Secondary Prevention include:

- ◆ Mass distribution of St. Andrew Infection Prevention Plan with an emphasis on Secondary Prevention and the rationale for moving to Secondary prevention. Multiple media will be used including weekly bulletins, Pulse, website, and mass e-mails.
- ◆ Announce movement to Secondary Prevention at the beginning of each worship service referring the congregation to the Prevention information in the bulletin.
- ◆ Assure strict adherence to the Implementation recommendations related to Primary Prevention, especially availability of hand washing supplies and cleaning high touch areas.

TERTIARY PREVENTION will be activated when H1N1 influenza is at epidemic proportions in our community and our state health officials have declared a state of emergency.

Tertiary Prevention Practices focus on organizational actions to prevent infection and support the congregation as we are able. They are:

- ◆ Cancel worship services, preschool and face-to-face meetings and gatherings.
- ◆ If possible, keep the St. Andrew office open during usual business hours to serve as a linkage to meet the critical needs of our congregation and community as we are able.
- ◆ Information about all activities will be kept current on our website and via mass e-mails when possible. This may include sermons and/or home liturgies.

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