

Epidemic/Pandemic Policy

Introduction

From time to time, infectious diseases develop into epidemics or pandemics, and create increased risks for the community. These occasions require specific policies targeted at the disease in question and general efforts at preparedness. Project Independence (PI) wishes as far as possible to protect its residents, its staff, its volunteers, and the public from infection or contagion by epidemics and/or pandemics.

PI will facilitate, through its policies and procedures, strategies designed to reduce risks to its residents, its staff, its volunteers, and the public, consistent with occupational/work health and safety obligations. PI will comply with all directions from authorised public health officers and recognised medical authorities in relation to the epidemic or pandemic.

This policy falls within the field of operation of PI's overall Risk Management processes and is thus under the general supervision of the organisation's CEO.

Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to outline the strategies and actions that PI intends to take to prevent the transmission of infectious diseases that are epidemics or pandemics and control the transmission of infectious diseases when a case/s is identified.

This policy applies to employees, contractors, consultants, and volunteers at PI including all personnel affiliated with third parties.

Definitions

For this policy, **infectious diseases** mean diseases caused by pathogenic microorganisms, such as bacteria, viruses, parasites or fungi; the diseases can be spread, directly or indirectly, from one person to another. This policy is focused on infectious diseases that are declared to be an epidemic or pandemic.

Policy

PI will plan for and make advance preparations for the possibility that its operations will be affected by an epidemic or pandemic. In the event of an epidemic or pandemic, PI will:

- Assist its residents, staff and others, as relevant, to minimise their exposure to the illness concerned.
- Encourage those who have reason to believe that they are at risk of contracting the epidemic or pandemic to obtain a diagnosis and to seek treatment, where appropriate.
- Require residents, employees, volunteers, contractors and visitors to take reasonable precautions to prevent infection or contagion.
- Provide personal protective equipment to employees and visitors where appropriate,
- Provide up-to-date staff training in Hygiene and PPE Procedures for those employees in direct contact with residents.
- Maintain its services and operations throughout the period of concern.



In the event of an infectious disease being declared an epidemic or pandemic, PI requires people covered by this Policy to:

- take all precautions required by the appropriate authorities.
- take any additional precautions mandated by the Board after considering appropriate medical advice.

In carrying out the procedures PI will be guided by the information and directions provided by local health authorities, Commonwealth Health, and the World Health Organisation, and its occupational health and safety obligations.

Leave and Flexibility

PI recognises that employees may request or require paid and unpaid leave when they are unwell, at risk of or vulnerable to infection, and at risk of infecting others.

Workers may make use of leave consistent with PI 's leave policy, relevant industrial instruments, and the National Employment Standards, including access to unpaid leave.

PI may, at its discretion, direct those affected or reasonably at risk of being affected by the pandemic or epidemic, to remain away from the workplace or work remotely.

Above and beyond provisions

Where possible during an epidemic or pandemic, PI will aim to provide employee with flexibility to work remotely and to attend medical appointments.

Authorisation

PI Chair, Mr Glenn Keys OAM