

## **PURPOSE**

To improve epidemic/pandemic of influenza preparedness, in order to minimize the number and severity of the sick and the number of deaths, in annual epidemics of influenza and in case of a pandemic.

## **OBJECTIVES**

The objectives of the Influenza Pandemic Preparedness Plan refer to:

### **1. Influenza Surveillance:**

- To collect data on circulating strains of the virus in comparison with the composition of the vaccine
- To describe the population that is affected, in order to facilitate the identification of high-risk groups and to compare them with other population groups and periods of influenza activity.
- To detect unusual cases or types of the virus, or unusual distribution or severity of the disease in the population
- To monitor the progress of the pandemic, based on the phases described by WHO

### **2. Planning and diagnosis of Influenza Cases:**

#### A. To upgrade the diagnostic capabilities for Influenza

- To nominate and develop Nicosia General Hospital as National Influenza Center and Microbiology Reference Laboratory for Influenza
- Use of commercial rapid antigen detection kits by the rest of the hospitals
- To develop protocols for safe collection, keeping and transport of respiratory specimens and blood
- To ensure reference laboratory availability

#### B. Clinical Management of Influenza Cases

To ensure effective and safe treatment of suspected human cases of a new influenza strain, by developing clinical protocols related to the diagnosis and management of these cases

### C. Infection control in the health care setting

Main aim is the prevention and control of the disease spread in the hospital setting.

## **3. Preventing the spread of the disease in the community**

### A. Public Health Measures

- To make recommendations regarding public health measures such as quarantine, cancellation of public gatherings and closures of schools
- To encourage planning and coordination at all levels of government regarding the potential impact of these measures

### B. Vaccines program

- Provision of safe and effective vaccination program for influenza during the interpandemic period
- Storage, distribution and in time administration of influenza vaccine
- Monitoring of the safety and effectiveness of the influenza vaccination program

### C. Program for the use of antivirals

- Development of a protocol for the use of antivirals during the pandemic
- To facilitate programming in order to ensure the distribution of the available antivirals to the appropriate groups of the population

## **4. Medical and Public Health Services preparedness**

- To get data of the possible number of patients who are going to need in-patient medical care, care in an intensive care unit or on a respirator
- To estimate the possible duration of patient' s stay in the hospital, by age group

- To estimate the possible number of beds that are going to be needed
- To nominate the hospitals, those are going to provide in-patient care of the patients.
- To plan for the medical examination and treatment of patients
- To estimate the number of the staff, the medical equipment and the resources that are going to be used
- To plan the way to communicate with the authorities, the personnel, the relatives of the patients and the public in general.

## **5. Communication**

The quick and accurate communication of all activities of the Ministry of Health, to the various levels, as well as the way the public should behave in case of a pandemic, in order to minimize any untoward and unpredictable social and economic impact. In particular:

- To ensure the existence of communication mechanisms in case of an emergency, at the level of the Ministry of Health or higher
- To keep all stakeholders informed-
- To develop communication channels with the media and the public in relation to epidemic/pandemic preparedness and in particular possible Influenza Pandemic