Disaster Planning

Scenario: You are the PHN working at your local public health department in the nursing division. It is the middle of summer, and you have been receiving telephone calls asking about “the flu season” since the vaccine wasn’t accurate in predicting the strains of influenza that affected your community last year, and many people contracted the virus. Business and community leaders are concerned because they don’t want a repeat performance of last year. You have been asked to develop some solutions to community concerns. Select two of the following scenarios and respond to the questions that are posed in each. As you consider the scenarios you have selected, think about the following considerations as you develop your responses. Which agencies are available to lead and assist in the disaster response? What resources are available in your community? How might resources be used most efficiently? Are there any gaps that may pose a problem? Identify potential strengths and weaknesses in the community Scenario 1: Imagine that initial pandemic flu cases have been identified in your jurisdiction. Some people are home sick, and others are staying home fearful that they may become infected with the flu. What advice would you give to local business owners to prepare for this event? Name two actions that business owners can take to keep their businesses open. Scenario 1, Part B. As incidents of influenza continue to rise, local business owners are worried about loss of revenue if several large planned conventions are forced to cancel due to the flu. What advice can you give these business owners? Should all events be cancelled? Scenario 2: Disease rates are rising, and estimates are that as many as 20% of the population are ill with confirmed influenza. Several businesses have closed and services have been suspended. What advice would you give to local law enforcement officials so they can continue to serve the needs of the people? Describe two actions that law enforcement workers can take to remain on the job. How will the gaps in personnel created by those who are ill be covered by those who are still well? What advice will you give? Scenario 3: Disease rates are remaining at 20% of the population, and many schools have closed due to teacher absence. Since parents still have to work if they are not sick with the flu, what advice can you give day care providers? What two ideas can you share with them so they can stay open and able to care for the children of working parents? Should all school sporting events be cancelled? What information should parents be given? Should announcements be given daily? Scenario 4: The numbers of influenza victims has reached 25% of the population. Many of the large grocery stores in your community are short-staffed due to employee sick calls. Shelves are bare since many of the workers are home with the flu, and even if the storeowner could stock the shelves, cashiers are home sick, too. In-store pharmacists are struggling to keep their pharmacies open to serve the public. Consumables like bread and milk are in short supply since many delivery drivers are home sick. What two actions can you recommend to these storeowners so that your community doesn’t suffer? Scenario 5: With 25% of the total population sick with influenza, your hospital is short of staff at a time of very high census. While many of the administrative positions are unaffected by illness, at least 40% of the nurses have called in sick or are at home caring for very sick children. Name two recommendations that you can give your hospital administration to keep their services available for the community. Scenario 6: The community is turning to the Health Department for assistance because reported incidents of influenza have risen from 5% of the population to 10% of the population in a matter of days. What is your first response to this situation? What steps will you take? Where will you start?