European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control

ECDC issues recommendations for strengthening emergency and pandemic preparedness planning

News story

20 Mar 2024

Translate this page

In a report released today, ECDC outlines key strategic and operational considerations to inform preparedness planning around the design and implementation of Public Health and Social Measures (PHSMs) in the EU/EEA for health emergencies and pandemics.

PHSMs refer to non-pharmaceutical measures implemented in community settings to abate the spread of infectious disease. These constituted the primary public health response during the initial phases of the COVID-19 pandemic, notably before medical countermeasures including vaccines became widely available. In future pandemics PHSMs may again be relied upon to reduce disease transmission and mitigate detrimental health impacts.

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> "It is likely that PHSMs will be once again relied upon in the early phases of future pandemics. It is vital that lessons continue to be learned from the COVID-19 pandemic, and that these are integrated into pandemic preparedness plans in a way that informs decision-making and action during future health emergencies and pandemics," says Jonathan Suk, ECDC Principal Expert for Emergency Preparedness and Response.
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The report provides recommendations across five areas:
- Incorporating PHSMs in health security governance landscapes – which are the processes, structures and institutions in place to oversee and manage a country's healthcare system;
- Monitoring and assessing the implementation of PHSMs;
- Assessing the broader social and public health impact of PHSMs;
- Building trust and ensuring effective communication through community engagement;
- Enhancing multi-disciplinary coordination in decision-making.

This guidance is based on the findings from two expert consultations arranged by ECDC in June 2022 and May 2023, and draws on multiple lessons learned exercises and relevant ECDC and World Health Organization (WHO) documentation. The intended audience include experts and decision-makers in Ministries of Health and national public health authorities and institutions responsible for pandemic preparedness planning and/or infectious disease control.

Read the report

(/en/publications-data/public-health-and-social-measures-health-emergencies-and-pandemics)
Scientific and technical publications

Public health and social measures for health emergencies and pandemics in the EU/EEA: recommendations for strengthening preparedness planning

Guidance - 20 Mar 2024

Preparedness, prevention and control tools

ECDC tools and resources support activities in the areas of preparedness, prevention and control of infectious diseases.

Read more ❯
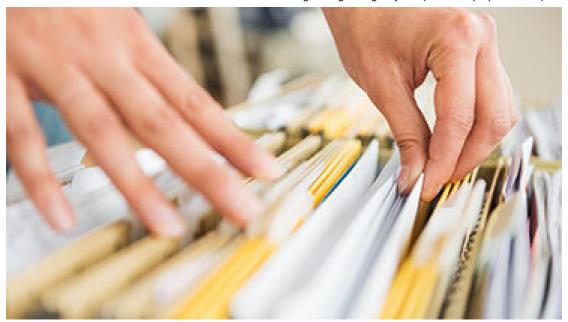
(/en/tools/country-resources)

ECDC model for national pandemic preparedness

ECDC presentational tool to visualise the multi-dimensional aspects needed to ensure adequate preparedness for a pandemic (September 2008). This tool highlights aspects that national authorities need to consider in order to move towards full preparedness across in three crucial dimensions: from plans through practise (exercises) to preparedness; from national level planning to operational planning for local and front line staff; and from health sector to multisectoral approach.

Read more ❯

(/en/publications-data/ecdc-model-national-pandemic-preparedness)

ECDC Pandemic Preparedness Self Assessment Indicators

This is part of the pandemic preparedness assessment tool for Europe, developed by the Unit for Preparedness and Response at the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control (ECDC) in Stockholm, in collaboration with the European Commission and the World Health Organisation Regional Office for Europe.

Read more ❯

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