

Community Healthcare Decision Making Tool

Brief Guide

Overview of the CHDMT

Community and healthcare leaders and other decision makers, such as public health officials, healthcare partners and emergency management coordinators, can use the Community Healthcare Decision Making Tool (CHDMT) during an influenza pandemic to assess resources available at healthcare facilities, medical surge within the community, and the severity of the medical surge. The CHDMT also can help community and healthcare leaders and other decision makers to make decisions regarding appropriate sites of care where patients can be screened, treated or transferred during an influenza pandemic. Therefore, when using the CHDMT, community and healthcare leaders and other decision makers should advise their healthcare partners to appoint employees at these facilities to collect needed site-of-care assessment data when requested. Finally, use of the CHDMT in conjunction with the Pandemic Influenza Triage Algorithm (PITA)¹ can enhance overall community influenza pandemic planning, preparedness and response.

Goals of the CHDMT

- Help community and healthcare leaders and other decision makers assess medical surge at the community level to mobilize necessary resources during an influenza pandemic.
- Help community and healthcare leaders and other decision makers direct patients to the appropriate sites of care during an influenza pandemic based on each patient's PITA acuity levels and resource needs.

Assumptions of the CHDMT

- Community-level partnerships have been established among public health departments, community healthcare agencies and organizations, and emergency management agencies.
- Partners and community leaders are in communication with each other on a regular basis.
- Partners and community healthcare leaders have developed a pandemic influenza preparedness plan at the community level that addresses issues such as resource needs, medical surge and sites of care.
- Partners and community healthcare leaders are familiar with the National Incident Management System (NIMS), including functions of an Emergency Operations Center (EOC) and a community Incident Command System (ICS).

Recommended Use of the CHDMT

- When an influenza pandemic is declared.
- Along with the PITA and community pandemic influenza plans.
- In conjunction with other available methods to assess community and healthcare resources, medical surge, and medical facility capacities and capabilities.
- To help identify appropriate sites of care for patients (based on their PITA levels).

¹ The Pandemic Influenza Triage Algorithm (PITA) was developed by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Healthcare Preparedness Activity (CDC-HPA) with input from a group of medical triage experts. The PITA is intended only for in-person triage of patients (performed by healthcare professionals) who have suspected exposure to influenza during a pandemic.