UNITED STATES OFFICE OF PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT
Washington, DC 20415

The Director

June 9, 2006

OPM PANDEMIC MEMO #1

MEMORANDUM FOR AGENCY HEADS, MEMBERS OF THE PRESIDENT'S MANAGEMENT COUNCIL AND CHIEF HUMAN CAPITAL OFFICERS

FROM: LINDA M. SPRINGER
DIRECTOR
OFFICE OF PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT

Subject: Information on Planning for a Pandemic Influenza Outbreak

President George W. Bush has directed each Federal department and agency to develop a comprehensive preparedness plan in the event this country experiences a pandemic influenza outbreak. The Office of Personnel Management (OPM) has been tasked with leading two initiatives in the *Implementation Plan for the National Strategy for Pandemic Influenza* – providing guidance on human capital management and COOP planning criteria, and updating telework guides. OPM is working in consultation with the Departments of Defense, Homeland Security, Health and Human Services and Labor, as well as with the Chief Human Capital Officers Council, on these two initiatives.

All of us share the goal of making sure we are able to fulfill our mission, while at the same time preparing and protecting our workforce should a pandemic influenza outbreak occur. To that end, OPM is in the process of updating and developing policies on leave, pay, hiring, alternative work arrangements and other critical human capital issues in relation to a pandemic influenza outbreak and will provide that information to agencies and departments no later than August 3. Rather than waiting until everything is complete, we will be providing information in three installments. This information will also be featured on OPM's web site at www.opm.gov/pandemic.

Attached is the first of these installments which includes –

- Table of Contents
- Introduction to Policy Guidance (I-A)
- Index and Quick Reference Guide for Policy Guidance (I-B)
- Hiring Flexibilities (I-C)
- Leave Flexibilities (I-D)
- Miscellaneous (I-G)
- Other Information Sources (VII)

You will note the Table of Contents details all of the information OPM will provide, including future installments which will contain sections on telework guidance, frequently asked questions, fact sheets and guides, and best practices. While much of the information is technical in nature and is geared to human resources professionals, we will also be providing information that is employee-friendly and easily understandable, including an employee guide. Our guidance will be provided to you both electronically and in hard copy form in a notebook which we will deliver to you in the next few days. We encourage you to use the electronic version in sharing information through your own web site.

If and when a pandemic influenza outbreak occurs, communicating both to agency leaders and to employees will be critical. OPM is committed to working with you to develop both guidance and employee information that enables you to make decisions and communicate effectively.

In the meantime, we encourage agencies to:

- Examine your current workplace flexibilities now in order to be prepared. Rigorous scrutiny of available workplace flexibilities can ensure agencies are able to meet their mission. (See Sections I-C and I-D; additional guidance will be provided in future installments.)
- Ensure you have updated, current information on all employees. Be sure you have a well-publicized, accessible process for updating such information as it changes.
- Follow established policies and procedures for workplace-related communications.
- Know where to turn for up-to-date information about State, local and Federal decisions on issues such as quarantine, emergency assistance and related emergency concerns. (See Section VI.)
- Make every effort to ensure all employees know agency policies, including with whom they should communicate in case of an emergency or absence.
- Make a concerted effort to increase employee awareness of safe, healthy practices that can stop or minimize the spread of communicable diseases. Additional information can be found at www.pandemicflu.gov.

If you have any suggestions on specific guidance or authorities you believe you will need to deal with pandemic influenza in your agency, please submit those suggestions through your agency's Chief Human Capital Officer. We look forward to sending you additional guidance in the future and, as always, welcome your comments and suggestions.

Attachment