

## International

The World Health Organization (WHO) developed a six-phase alert system, with clearly defined roles established for governments, industry, and WHO to follow. Currently, WHO is at phase 3, defined as: "a virus new to humans is causing infections but does not spread easily from person to person." The WHO urged all countries to develop preparedness plans and to stockpile antiviral drugs nationally for use at the start of an influenza pandemic. Approximately 30 countries are purchasing large quantities of these drugs. However, the manufacturer does not have the capacity to fill these orders immediately. Furthermore, the WHO issued a series of recommended strategic actions for countries to follow for response to an influenza pandemic.

WHO estimates an influenza pandemic may affect between 20 and 50 percent of the total population, resulting in 2 to 7 million deaths and tens of millions of people seeking medical attention. The U.S. government estimates the clinical disease attack rate will be about 30 percent in the overall U.S. population. The impact on America's work-force over a three-to-four month period will result in absentee rates of 25-30 percent, costing the economy \$70 – \$160 billion. However, the government does recognize that absentee rates will depend on the severity of the pandemic. Additionally, the government estimates there would be multiple waves of infection, where numerous community outbreaks will occur simultaneously across the country. Each wave could last 2-3 months.