

PROCEDURE

Series:	Risk Management/QA	COA: CFOP:
Procedure Name:	Planning for Large Epidemics and Pandemics	
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Applicable to:	Brevard Family Partnership (BFP) Family of Agencies Board of Directors, All BFP Family of Agencies Staff, Officers, and Contracted Providers	

SUBJECT: Planning and Mitigating Risk during environmental outbreaks

PURPOSE: To establish a process within the COSO Enterprise Risk Management framework (ERM) to identify and diminish potential risk exposure from an epidemic or pandemic outbreak that has a significant impact on the local or global environment and to formulate a strategic response where the risk acceptance is mitigated by the actions of Senior Leadership and the Board of Directors.

References BFP Governance Policies: GOV203 Risk Management

Definitions

Risk: A possible event or circumstance that can have a negative effect on the BFP FOA's.

COSO: Committee of Sponsoring Organizations of the Treadway Commission

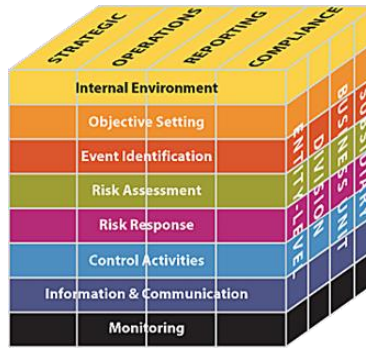
Outbreak: A sudden rise in the number of cases of a disease. An outbreak may occur in a community or geographical area or may affect several countries. It may last for a few days or weeks, or even for several years.

Epidemic: A sudden outbreak of a disease in a certain geographical area or the rapid spread of disease to a large number of people in a given population.

Pandemic: An outbreak of a disease that has spread across several countries or continents or a disease that is prevalent over a whole country or the world.

POLICY/PROCEDURE:

The COSO Enterprise Risk Management (ERM) framework comprises both Objectives and Components. There is a direct relationship between objectives, which are what an entity strives to achieve and enterprise risk management components, which represent what is needed to achieve them. The relationship is depicted in a three-dimensional matrix as shown:



Objectives

The BFP Board of Directors (Board) establishes the mission of BFP and sets the risk tolerance of the organization. The BFP Board of Directors regularly reviews specific issues at the monthly Board meetings, and at the Board Risk Management Committee meeting and provides the risk tolerance accordingly.

Within the context of the mission for BFP, management has established strategic objectives, select strategy, and set aligned objectives implemented throughout the organization. The ERM framework for BFP is geared to achieving established objectives, set forth in four categories:

- Strategic – High-level goals, aligned with and supporting BFP’s mission.
- Operations – Effective and efficient use of BFP resources.
- Reporting – Reliability of capturing data for reporting and analysis.
- Compliance – Compliance with applicable laws and regulations.

The Board realizes that objectives relating to reliability of reporting and compliance with laws and regulations are within the entity’s control; therefore, ERM can be expected to provide reasonable assurance of achieving those objectives.

Achievement of strategic and operations objectives, however, is subject to external events not always within the entity’s control; accordingly, for these objectives, the Board acknowledges that ERM can provide reasonable assurance that management, and the Board in its oversight role, are made aware, in a timely manner, of the extent to which the entity is moving toward achievement of the objectives.

Components

ERM consists of eight interrelated components. These are derived from the way management runs an enterprise and are integrated with the management process. These components are:

- Internal Environment –
The internal environment encompasses the tone of an organization and sets the basis for how risk is viewed and addressed by an entity’s people, including risk management philosophy and risk appetite, integrity and ethical values, and the environment in which they operate.

- **Objective Setting –**
Objectives must exist before management can identify potential events affecting their achievement. Enterprise risk management ensures that management has in place a process to set objectives and that the chosen objectives support and align with the entity's mission and are consistent with its risk appetite.

- **Event Identification –**

Internal and external events affecting achievement of an entity's objectives are identified, distinguishing between risks and opportunities. Opportunities are channeled back to management's strategy or objective-setting processes.

- **Risk Assessment –**
Risks are analyzed, considering likelihood and impact, as a basis for determining how they should be managed. Risks are assessed on an inherent and a residual basis.

- **Risk Response –**
Management selects risk responses – avoidance, elimination, reduction, sharing/transferring or acceptance of risk – developing a set of actions to align risks with the entity's risk tolerances and risk appetite.

- **Control Activities –**
Policies and procedures are established and implemented to help ensure the risk responses are effectively carried out.

- **Information and Communication –**
Relevant information is identified, captured, and communicated in a form and timeframe that enable people to carry out their responsibilities. Effective communication also occurs in a broader sense, flowing down, across, and up the entity.

- **Monitoring –**
The entirety of enterprise risk management is monitored, and modifications made as necessary. Monitoring is accomplished through ongoing management activities, separate evaluations, or both.

It should be remembered that ERM is not strictly a serial process, where one component affects only the next. It is a multidirectional, interactive process in which almost any component can and does influence another.

Roles and Responsibilities:

All staff of BFP FOA has some responsibility for ERM.

The President and Chief Executive Officer (CEO) is responsible for the organization's risk and should take ownership of the process. The President and CEO's role will primarily focus on establishing strategic objectives, selecting strategies to meet the existing objectives, and to set aligned objectives throughout the FOA's.

The Senior Executive Team will assist the President and CEO in establishing the strategic objectives and selecting the strategies that will best diminish the associated risk to the organization.

Organizational Identified Environmental Risk

Outbreaks: A sudden rise in the number of cases of a disease. An outbreak may occur in a community or geographical area or may affect several countries. It may last for a few days or weeks, or even for several years. Some outbreaks are expected each year, such as influenza. BFP FOA experienced an outbreak during the fall of 2019 when two-thirds of the BFP workforce had the influenza. The FOA reported high numbers of staff also out during this period.

Epidemics: The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) describes an epidemic as an unexpected increase in the number of disease cases in a specific geographical area. Yellow fever, smallpox, measles, and polio are prime examples of epidemics that occurred throughout American history.

Pandemics: A pandemic is a global disease outbreak. It differs from an outbreak or epidemic because it:

- Affects a wider geographical area, often worldwide.
- Infects a greater number of people than an epidemic.
- Is often caused by a new virus or strain of virus that has not circulated among people for a long time. Humans usually have little to no immunity against it. The virus spreads quickly from person-to-person worldwide.
- Causes much higher numbers of deaths than epidemics.
- Often creates social disruption, economic loss, and general hardship.

The influenza (flu) pandemic of 1918-1919 killed between 20 and 40 million people. It is one of the most devastating pandemics in recorded world history. 2009 H1N1 influenza was a more recent global pandemic until 2020 when COVID-19 spread globally. Public health experts say it's not a matter of IF a flu pandemic will happen, but WHEN.

Pandemic preparation:

The Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19) continues to affect many different parts of our communities, lives, and workplaces. As COVID-19 continues to spread and impact our daily lives, BFP FOA is dedicated to providing our staff, providers, and community partners with the most up-to-date information.

Pandemic preparedness and response touch many ethical issues, including the relationship between the individual and the state, and there is no one-size-fits all approach.

During the onset of this pandemic, BFP's President and CEO enacted his role in leadership and took ownership of the recent events. He quickly and efficiently organized a COVID-19 task force comprised of the Senior Leadership of BFP FOA.

The key roles and responsibilities of the Leadership Support Team include:

- Team Leader: (President and CEO) Phil Scarpelli
- Operations Lead: (VP of Operations and COO) Valerie Holmes
- Logistics Lead: James Carlson
- Communications Lead: (HR) Cyndi Hernandez and (PR)

- Technical Lead: (Data Analytics & IT) Kevin Maloney
- FOA Leadership (Katie Guemple, Kathryn Parker)

Using the ERM framework, the leadership team executed the four categories and the components related to the framework to mitigate the risk to BFP FOA staff and with our system of care network providers.

The Process:

The team uses an application called Trello. It was organized in categories to efficiently track information and give quick reporting. The categories include: Administration, Plans, Resources, Exposures, Provider Impacts, Direct Care, Foster Community, Extended Foster Care, Residential Group Care, On-Call, Facilities, Technical Support, Stakeholders, Future Engagements, HR Functions, PR Functions, Legal Functions, QA/Training Functions, Travel Related Information.

It should be noted that strategic and operation objectives may be influenced by external events and regulatory compliance that is outside the organization's control.

Administration – Track Florida Department of Health COVID-19 Statistics, COVID Live updates from the Worldometer, setup video conferencing platforms such as, GoToMeeting, Zoom, and Teams, and establish communication control that the President and CEO delivers all communication to the FOA's.

Plans – Establish a telework schedule for all staff, implement the COVID-19 Strategy Plans by Department outlining roles and responsibilities within the departments and detailed points of contact information. Create a single point of tracking of plans. Create a Return to Office Plan outlining the requirements for creating a safe work environment. The Return to Office Plan is a comprehensive 39-page document that was created using many government agencies and regulatory compliance guidelines surrounding the COVID-19 pandemic. *Note: Depending on the crisis, research and resources will vary, the resources used for COVID-19 are listed here:

Resources –

- Monitor the Office of the Governor/Executive Orders regarding COVID-19
- Brevard's Emergency Operation Center (EOC) Testing Information
- FCC COVID-19 Tools and Resources
- Resources from Opening America
- Insperity Resources on Return to Work
- Department of Children and Families Central Region Checklist
- Helpful practice guides from Central Region CBC's (Heartland for Children and Embrace Families)
- State and Federal Resources
- Tools used to mobilize your workforce (Virtual Teams and Platforms)
- New York State Guidance on Child Welfare Activities
- FedEx Procedures for Delivery of Parcels
- Council on Accreditation Information regarding site visits
- OSHA 3990 Guidance on preparing workplaces for COVID-19
- Faith Community Organizations Serving during COVID-19
- FDA information on PPE and Hand Sanitizer

COVID-19 Exposures – Implement tracking system for tracking exposures and confirmed COVID-19 cases related to staff, clients, providers, system of care partners.

- Critical Incident Reporting used for (Foster Parents, Children in Care, Relative/Non-Relative Caregiver's, Group Homes)
- Mindshare COVID-19 Tracking Workspace (Provides accurate data capturing and reporting of Children in Care). The Provider Workspace tracks our Foster Families and highlights those Foster Parents at high-risk due to age.
 - Exposure date
 - Test Status
 - Cleared Date
 - Recovered Date
 - Quarantine Status
 - Vaccination Date

During the leadership calls, BFP Contracts Director will update the team regarding new reports of COVID-19 confirmed cases, exposures, deaths, etc. The Case Management Leadership will report known staff cases and possible exposures.

Provider Impacts – Reporting of service-related closures that impact children and families is critical. During COVID-19, BFP/FOA tracked dental providers, daycare providers, and other health providers impacting disruption of health and medical services. These services impacted BFP's Contracted Performance in multiple areas.

- Magic Dental closed their office to routine procedures. They were closed nearly 4-months causing a disruption in children in care receiving necessary dental check-ups and procedures.
- Brevard Health Alliance (BHA) closed their offices for general visits. They were only taking emergency cases.
- Brevard Daycare Closures impacted working parents and their ability to be wage earners.

Direct Care Impacts – Reporting of services related to those processes that could or have been interrupted by COVID-19 protocols. BFP/FOA require the submission of telework agreements and telework tracking logs be submitted for approval to their immediate supervisor.

Direct Care services that are monitored closely for impact on operations include:

- Permanency Tracking
- Home Visits
- Home Studies
- Court Functions
- Internal Operations Meetings
- High Risk Cases
- Livescan Services

Foster Community – Our foster community is vital to the mission. BFP/FOA closely monitored the activities that could impact the organization's ability to continue with foster recruitment activities and foster training. The areas monitored during the COVID-19 pandemic included:

- PRIDE Training
- Foster Parent Association

- Support Groups
- Day Care Closure and Financial Support
- Administration support for communication to our licensed care network

Strategies implemented:

- Creating a safe environment for continued foster parent training (classroom/virtual)
- President and CEO video platform for communicating with foster parents on a regular basis
- The creation of GoToMeeting accounts for foster parent support groups
- Distribution of Day Care closures and financial support information
- Increased administrative support and communication to our foster parent network

Extended Foster Care – BFP/FOA recognizes that some young adults may need assistance during a crisis like COVID-19. They are still part of the foster care system and must not be forgotten. In an effort to ensure their safety, contact with youth is initiated and periodic check-ins are made.

Strategies implemented:

- Check-in with youth to provide emotional support and reliable information
- Reach out to youth in college or training programs to offer assistance with food, health care and other mental health support.
- Assist youth in college or other settings find and secure housing while schools are closed.
- Assist and guide youth with financial information
- Assist youth with reemployment information

Residential Group Care – Just as important to our Foster Community, is the Residential Group Care. They are responsible for children in care that can't find placement with our fostering parents. BFP/FOA established monitoring procedures to track staff/children's exposures and the impact on placement options. Each provider will supply BFP/FOA their plan regarding operations during a pandemic event.

- Devereux established a Pandemic Management Committee (PMC) that met on a regular basis to discuss the following issues that would impact their operations
 - Steps to mitigate the spread of the identified illness
 - Coordination of care for those infected with the identified illness
 - Communication to staff and other stakeholders about their activities
 - Procurement of necessary resources
 - Continuity of business operations
- Crosswinds Youth Services established a Youth Supervision Plan to mitigate the impact of their operations and the safety of children and staff
 - Establish basic screening procedures for services/facilities access
 - Daily Activities will be modified to serve the emotional, physical, and psychological needs of the clients
 - Facility sanitization will occur 3 times per day per 24-hour period
 - Staff wellness to include
 - Safe activities for youth
 - Wellness exercises
 - Updates on household and hygiene supplies

- Local and National resources and safety tips
- Training opportunities
- Video platform communications
- Friends of Children and Families Contingency Plan includes health precautions to minimize the impact of their operations
 - Monitor youth on a daily basis
 - Pre-Screening of new youth to the facility
 - New youth isolated when possible for 14 days in their own room
 - Practice social distancing when possible
 - Quarantine youth with known exposure
 - Youth will be placed in own room
 - Youth will wear face mask
 - Staff will wear PPE (face masks, gloves, gowns)
 - Coordinate with Case Management for medical care
 - Isolate youth with a laboratory confirmed COVID-19 result that doesn't require hospitalization
 - Staff will follow CDC guidance
 - Staff will wear PPE when coming in contact with infected youth
 - If possible, youth and staff will relocate to another location
- On-Call procedures will be evaluated and updated as necessary.
- Facilities – On the onset of the pandemic, the CDC guidance was to minimize personnel reporting to work. BFP/FOA quickly established facility protocols to address the impacts of its operations.
 - Establish and address mail delivery and package dropoff/pickup procedures
 - Develop containment strategies
 - Procure infection control supplies (DCF/FCC) supply chains and resources
 - Develop procedures for COVID-19 Office Guidelines
 - Health Checks
 - Possible contact with confirmed or suspected COVID-19 infected people
 - Precautionary Measures if you feel sick and other safety measures to prevent spread
 - Keeping you safe procedures
 - Increase cleaning and disinfection (Professional Sanitization)
 - Enforce social distancing (Create barriers)
 - Issue PPE
 - Controlling Access
 - Adjusting work schedules
 - Staffing of Facilities
- IT Technical Support – BFP/FOA created a virtual environment using many different video platforms to ensure staff stayed connected when working remotely or telecommuting. It is important to create a means that people can still feel connected in an environment that is isolating people from one another.
 - IT will create a Virtual Private Network (VPN) connection for staff to access local and state resources

- IT will create communication methods to minimize impacts to training, home visits, and other activities that minimize possible exposure to COVID-19
 - MS Team
 - GoToMeeting
 - Zoom
 - Text Messaging
 - Remind Notification System
 - Provide Tutorial videos on using the different video platforms
 - Provide information about the security risks of using video platforms (Don't make connections to meetings "Public.")
- Stakeholders are important to the overall mission of BFP/FOA. As such, communication is essential to keep them informed of impacts to our System of Care.

Strategies Implemented:

- Ensure regular contact with the DCF Contract Oversight Unit
- Ensure regular communication with our Providers
- Ensure regular contact with Children Legal Services
- Ensure regular contact with Guardian Ad-Litem Program
- Ensure regular contact with Youth Thrive
- Ensure regular communication with BFP Board of Directors

Future Engagements were part of the BFP/FOA Plan. Leadership needed to know what travel plans employees were planning to take to provide guidance that the CDC put out on non-essential travel. During the onset of the pandemic, all travel was suspended to include:

- Travel to state and out-of-state conferences
- Travel to COVID-19 hotspots for those requesting personal travel
- Travel for Training
- Travel to our organization for scheduled meetings

Internal future engagements, like Company and Department meetings that were scheduled for in-person were cancelled or rescheduled to be held via virtually. In addition, meetings that required in-person presence were limited to the CDC guidelines for social distancing. Local community gatherings and workgroup meetings are highly discouraged and guidance to hold the meeting virtually was recommended.

Public Relations – Public Relations is instrumental in establishing procedures for communication and procurement of PPE equipment and resources.

Strategies Implemented:

- Create a newsletter that contained important information related to the operations of BFP/FOA during the pandemic and also as a means to keep staff engaged
- Develop periodic employee emails
- Update and test the text alert system
- Post COVID-19 information on the organization's website
- Create a call-in voice recording regarding hours of operation and other important information for clients
- Set-up conference bridge with designated call times
- Ensure communication with customers in relation to delays in service

- Create a President and CEO Facebook Live Message
- Provider Communication Notification outlining:
 - General Practices
 - Prevention to Clients receiving home visits
 - Establishing Services that can be provided via Telehealth
 - Provide a weekly conference call to providers that establish two-way dialogue addressing concerns that impact children and families
 - Provide local health websites for COVID-19 guidelines

Legal Functions – BFP/FOA continued to monitor information provided by the Attorney General's office on court proceedings. This function is extremely important as it impacts the possibilities of family reunification, adoptions, and permanency measures. Delayed hearings have a direct impact on the system of care.

Strategies Implemented:

- Established a communication tree by establishing points of contact with our Children Legal Services in Palm Bay and Rockledge
- Monitored and communicated all information published by the Florida Supreme Court referencing Administrative Orders and Amendments on how court proceedings will be held with continuing to support public safety
- Monitor and communicate how Brevard County Court proceedings will be held as this would impact case management practices
 - Evidentiary Hearings will be done virtually
 - TPR trials will be done remotely
 - Dependency trials will be conducted remotely

Quality Assurance and Training Functions – BFP reevaluated how it needed to conduct Pre-Service Training. Consultation with the Florida Certification Board and implementation of remote training requirements were instituted. In addition to fulfilling necessary case management training requirements, implementation of new processes to conduct reviews was initiated.

Strategies Implemented:

- The following in-person reviews/trainings that were conducted in-person were moved to the virtual environment
 - CFSR Reviews
 - PIP Reviews
 - RSF Reviews
 - In-Service Trainings

Ongoing monitoring and communication will be implemented as the world moves further away from the initial onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. With variants and continued spread of the virus, BFP/FOA will continue to assess its operational capabilities and reevaluate practices that are currently in place to ensure the safety of our employees, providers, stakeholders and all the children and families we serve in Brevard County and beyond. Our strategy was more of implementing processes and practices than to institute policy. With such a global impact COVID-19 has had on our world, we as an organization must be flexible, vigilant, and diligent in our efforts to not only to adhere to federal and state guidelines, but to institute strategies that best suite our mission to keep children safe!

BFP/FOA continues to hold regular communication meetings and will regularly update information organization wide as appropriate. We have encouraged all staff to get vaccinated and to obtain their booster shot when eligible. We maintain our position not to infringe on the personal rights of others and are very sensitive to our messaging when addressing our staff.

BY DIRECTION OF THE PRESIDENT AND
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER



PHILIP J. SCARPELLI
President and Chief Executive Officer
Brevard Family Partnership / Family of Agencies

Signature Date: 4/5/22