

## **MEASURES AND PRECAUTIONS TAKEN BY THE IT-BPO INDUSTRY TO TACKLE H1N1**

The response from the IT-BPO industry to the present crisis of Swine Flu has been very proactive. Like all other industries in the country, we are concerned that the spread of the swine flu needs to be contained at the earliest. There are many myths and we should not create panic. Governments are working to manage this and it is important that we work with them.

The IT-BPO industry has taken strong precautionary measures at the workplace to minimize the risk of infection and containment of H1N1 flu. The issue is a global issue which started in April 09, since then the industry has taken steps to safeguard employee health and safety while ensuring continuity of business operations.

Following are some of the practices that our member companies have adopted to ensure employee health and minimal impact on business operations.

### **Strengthening Employee Awareness & Education**

The fundamental and most important job is to communicate and ensure that right and well researched information is available to all. This would ensure employees do self help and avoid panic.

- Refer to authentic information available at:  
WHO site: <http://www.who.int/csr/disease/swineflu/en/>  
Ministry of Health, Govt. of India: <http://www.mohfw.nic.in/swineflu/main.html>
- Ensure communication percolates to all the employees via emails, posters across all buildings at prominent locations, intranet message etc. – educating on the flu and actions to be taken
- Reiterate personal hygiene and coughing etiquettes / Do's and Don'ts / FAQs (Data available on above sites which are constantly updated)
- Encourage employees to inform their manager in case they have any symptoms of flu or have been in contact with anyone suffering from H1N1.
- Employees to take care and stay at home till the flu symptoms are fully cured. Be flexible with their leave plans.
- Appoint a nodal officer within the company and communicate the 24X7 helpline number

### **International Travel**

Travel is an integral part of our business. Both inward and outward travel continues. However the need for precautions to be taken needs to be communicated to employees, customers and vendors alike as we had done before in the case of the outbreak of bird flu.

- Precautionary measures pamphlet to be provided to all international travelers both incoming and outgoing
- Standard Operating Procedures for employees visiting/ returning to India from affected countries – reporting symptoms, quarantine for a period if necessary
- Informing the Manager/ HR person about travel, including personal travel from overseas

### **Medical precautions**

- Increased surveillance and monitoring for identification of any possible suspected cases at workplace
- The medical teams to be in touch with the local nodal public health hospitals to assure rapid community response to any infection in the workplace.
- Personal protection supplies for the medical personnel, such as surgical masks, gloves being stocked in reasonable quantity (These are for medical personnel only)
- Tie-up with key hospitals in and around the campus with ambulance services in case of an emergency.

### **Facility**

- Notifications at receptions for visitors as well to follow company guidelines
- Hand sanitizers installed in key common access points at all buildings including washrooms
- Common area hard surfaces (eg handles & railings, common desks and counters, taps, elevator buttons etc) cleaned & sanitized with increased frequency
- All workplaces daily sanitized with an alcohol based disinfectant
- Addressing vendors and other non-employee visitors as well
- Front gate Security to visually screen people who may be visibly ill with persistent cough symptoms while entering the facility. Report any such case to the medical room.
- Site teams trained to carry out Contact Tracing to ensure that employees who come in contact with any infected person in workplace are traced for providing medical care.
- In case of any trigger of further escalation at any site, next level of precautions to be evaluated

**Pandemic Planning**

- Guidance to delivery teams on Business Continuity Planning for pandemic scenarios

**Communication**

- All sites taken through the process flow on steps in case of a suspected / confirmed case reported at the workplace
- For Media handling, Customer & Employee communication – holding statements, media contact point to be identified

\* The above information has been compiled from industry initiatives