



World Health
Organization

Health service continuity planning for public health emergencies

A handbook for health facilities

Interim version for field testing



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ISBN 978-92-4-003333-7 (electronic version)

ISBN 978-92-4-003334-4 (print version)

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Suggested citation. Health service continuity planning for public health emergencies: a handbook for health facilities. Interim version for field testing. Geneva: World Health Organization; 2021. Licence: CC BY-NC-SA 3.0 IGO.

Cataloguing-in-Publication (CIP) data. CIP data are available at <http://apps.who.int/iris>.

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Acknowledgements

This health service continuity planning handbook was developed by Yu Zhang and Redda Seifeldin, with valuable technical input from Zandile Zibwowa, Sara Nasr and Saqif Mustafa, under the overall supervision of Sohel Saikat. This work was undertaken as part of the major outputs of the Health Service Resilience Team, Integrated Health Services Department, WHO headquarters.

Appreciation goes to colleagues at WHO headquarters: Jonathan Abrahams, Aditi Bana, Stella Chungong, Frederik Copper, Stéphane De La Rocque, Ann-Lise Guisset, Zheng Jie Marc Ho, Qudsia Huda, Nirmal Kandel, Edward Kelley, Jostacio Lapitan, Matthew Neilson, Kathryn O'Neill, Teri Reynolds, Katthyana Aparicio Reyes, Rajesh Sreedharan, Ludy Suryantoro, Shamsuzzoha Syed, Jun Xing and Qi Zhang, for their support and contributions.

Appreciation also goes to colleagues at the WHO Regional Office for Africa and the WHO country offices in Ethiopia and Liberia (Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA)-funded Health Service Resilience project Team) for their contribution: Louis Ako-Egbe, Gertrude Avortri, Mekdim Ayana, Moses Bolongei, Faiqa Ebrahim, Nonso Ejiofor, Lokombe Elongo, Abiy Girmay, Pierre Kariyo and Prosper Tumusiime.

Sincere thanks go to KOICA, the United Kingdom Department for International Development (DFID-now part of the Foreign, Commonwealth & Development Office) and United States Agency for International Development (USAID) for their continuing support in projects and programmes led by the WHO Health Service Resilience Team.

Abbreviations

DFID	United Kingdom Department for International Development
KOICA	Korea International Cooperation Agency
PHE	public health emergency
USAID	United States Agency for International Development

Glossary

These definitions of terms are a synthesis of various resources, including WHO publications, academic literature and internal technical documents and expertise adapted to the context of health service continuity planning.

After-action review (AAR)

An AAR is a qualitative review of actions taken in response to an event of public health concern. An AAR is a means of identifying and documenting the best practices and challenges demonstrated by the response to the event. The review seeks to identify actions that need to be implemented immediately, to ensure better preparation for the next event. It also aims to identify medium and long-term actions needed to strengthen and institutionalize the necessary capabilities of the public health system (1).

Contingency planning

Contingency planning is a management process that analyses specific potential events or emerging situations that might threaten society or the environment and establishes arrangements in advance to enable timely, effective and appropriate responses to such events and situations. Contingency planning results in organized and coordinated courses of action with clearly identified institutional roles and resources, information processes and operational arrangements for specific actors at times of need. Based on scenarios of possible emergency conditions or public health emergency events, it allows key actors to envision, anticipate and solve problems that can arise during crises. Contingency planning is an important part of a much broader emergency preparedness process and recovery planning. This process often results in the development of a contingency plan.

“Contingency planning” and “continuity planning” are sometimes used interchangeably in literature and technical guidelines. They are similar regarding their purpose; both are intended to enable organizations to continue essential operations and functions in the event of emergencies. Generally, continuity planning is centred around the core question: how to maintain essential functions as usual in face of an emergency: continuity planning is intended

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