

States flu pandemic plans are conflicted

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Researchers say state plans for a U.S. flu pandemic are being hampered by lack of direction from federal officials and a dearth of scientific information.

The non-profit Research Triangle Institute International reviewed 49 pandemic plans posted on state health department Web sites and found wide disparities, USA Today reported. Only Louisiana failed to post a plan.

RTII officials said all states give vaccination priority to health and emergency workers, people with high-risk medical conditions, and elderly citizens, but are "markedly" different in plans for limiting personal contact and prevention guidance.

The researchers said they also found "confusion and lack of specificity" in plans to identify and contain a bird flu outbreak, USA Today said. For instance, there is no definition of what would trigger a declaration of a pandemic.

"We believe some of the problem results from weak central (federal) direction, as has been a criticism of national bioterrorism preparedness," the authors wrote.

The report appears in the September issue of Emerging Infectious Diseases, a journal of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and is available online at www.cdc.gov/ncidod/EID.

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