

Exercise Forrest Gump (XFG)

What is Exercise Forrest Gump (XFG)?

Exercise Forrest Gump will be conducted in all Hunter New England Health emergency departments, MPS facilities and acute mental health facilities over a five-day period in September (22 - 26 September 2008).

The exercise scenario is that pandemic influenza Australian Containment Phase has been declared following human-to-human transmission with a novel influenza strain, and pandemic cases begin presenting at our emergency departments.

The exercise is part of the ongoing training and pandemic planning being undertaken by Hunter New England Health. Training was one of the factors identified as necessary for pandemic readiness by our staff in the Health Worker Risk Perception Survey undertaken in 2008.

Exercise Forrest Gump will test the ability of our health service to identify and manage pandemic cases including ambulance transfers. It will also test notification of Public Health and the maintenance of strict infection control.

How long will the exercise last?

It is anticipated that the first 'cases' of pandemic influenza will present to Hunter New England Health emergency departments on Monday 22 September 2008. The exercise will finish on Thursday 25 September, with a participant after action review to be undertaken on Friday 26 September.

What is my role in Exercise Forrest Gump?

A number of staff will be involved in XFG, in our emergency departments and across the entire Hunter New England Health region.

Teams tested as part of XFG may include emergency department staff, population health staff, mental health teams, administrative and support staff. If you are unsure of your team's involvement in XFG, please speak with your line manager.

How will I know if I am participating in a hypothetical situation associated with XFG?

All participants in XFG will identify themselves as being associated with the exercise during game play. All related communication material and documentation will be branded 'EXERCISE ONLY'.

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So that we can draw valuable lessons and feedback from the exercise, we ask that you treat the scenario with the same priority and attention as you would a real disaster.

What if I haven't had any disaster training?

The purpose of XFG is to test our biopreparedness and disaster response procedures. In most situations, you will not be required to do anything which you would not ordinarily do as part of your every day role.

Exercise Forrest Gump is not designed to be difficult or trying on staff. Rather, with your cooperation, we will be able to identify areas for improvement, increased training and disaster responsiveness.

Some situations may arise during game play which will pose a challenge, as they would in the event of genuine pandemic influenza presentations. These situations will be identified as hypothetical, but should be responded to accordingly, as though the situation were real.

Who do I report to during XFG?

With the exception of staff reporting directly to the Health Services Functional Area Coordinator and Exercise Controller, reporting lines will not change. You should continue to report to your usual line manager.

How will XFG be assessed?

A number of national and international external evaluators have been invited to assess the performance and 'game play' of staff at a number of sites. These assessors have extensive experience in pandemic/disaster planning, and will provide valuable feedback to Hunter New England Health about our disaster preparedness.

For general information about Pandemic Influenza, visit

<http://www.hnehealth.nsw.gov.au/pandemic>

To visit the Exercise Forrest Gump intranet site during game play (22 – 26 September) visit <http://intranet.hne.health.nsw.gov.au/> (Available on Hunter New England Health Intranet only)