**Group Project 1: Public Health Scenario Leadership Application**

**Role: Mayor of Boston**

Based on the health scenario described, I think our group did a great job overall recognizing that there was an outbreak which needed the attention of public health officials and other federal agencies. So far everything went well as far as what needed to be done and executed in order to contain the virus and apply necessary procedures to save lives. We all agreed that it was crucial to keep the population informed and avoid any misunderstanding and misinformation about the outbreak that could lead to panic. We also agreed that effective communication is key during a public health emergency.

What I found challenging was actually taking those roles as public health officials and properly delivering instructions to manage the emergency situation. However, with the adequate tools and some practice by putting things into perspective, we were able to successfully address the situation.

I believe that I might respond differently it this public health scenario occurred again. I tend to take every situation as a learning experience. If this occur again, I will try to respond better based on the experience I had with the previous outbreak. Responding better means building a stronger team with more effective tools to overcome the public health emergency. I believe that there is always room to learn. Therefore, my team and I will be coming up with better ideas to respond to a potential outbreak in the future.

**Day 1 (Monday)**:

When a disease outbreak is suspected, it is crucial to take the proper precautions and necessary steps to reduce its spread. In order to accomplish this, all the health agencies and team members must work together diligently with effective communication to keep the citizens safe and healthy. Every health agency or organization plays a crucial role in preventing the spread of a communicable disease and necessary measures must be taken timely in order to avoid mass fatalities.

City mayors have many important responsibilities and are involved in a certain number of pandemic response activities that will help reduce the spread of communicable diseases. Those include initiating social distancing measures such as quarantine, isolation and school closures but also institute surge capacity; organizing of hospital care; allocating necessary medical and non-medical equipment; reaching out to individuals at higher risk; monitoring transport and movement of population and engaging police and first responders; obtaining enough water and food supplies; informing risks of disease to communities (Katz, 2018).

In the scenario described, as the mayor of the city of Boston, I will respond to the public health situation by gathering accurate information about the spread of SARS and communicate effectively with my peers who have more knowledge and medical expertise. In this case, the disease is already spreading quickly so it is important to collaborate with the participating agencies like CDC, WHO and the state health department in order to initiate social distancing measures, increase the number of testing and implement the closure of non-necessary businesses. Thus, it is advised to utilize the incident command system in order to effectively manage and coordinate the outbreak.

References

Katz, R. (2018, October). Urban Pandemic Preparedness: A call to action. Retrieved August 05, 2020, from <https://georgetown.app.box.com/s/kupyl4pm2hyh22nxdtfxjoxudmj86b67>

**Day 2 (Tuesday):**

As a mayor of the city of Boston I must make sure any information about the SARS disease outbreak is accurate. False information about death toll, treatment options and availability can trigger panic among citizens and lead to mistrust. Communication is key during a public health emergency. In their systematic literature review, Savoia, Lin, & Viswanath (2013) considered proper communication during a pandemic very important as “it helps mitigate the risks, supports the implementation of protective actions, and contributes to minimizing negative mental health impacts of disasters”.

To avoid any confusion, I would address the misinformation by advising all citizens to follow accurate information given by recognized agencies like the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), and the World Health Organization (WHO) among others. Clarification must be made that people should follow the official social media accounts of these agencies or official websites to seek any information about the outbreak.

References

Savoia, E., Lin, L., & Viswanath, K. (2013, September). Communications in public health emergency preparedness: A systematic review of the literature. Retrieved August 06, 2020, from <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3778998/>

**Day 3 (Wednesday):**

Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) is a deadly disease that poses the threat of a pandemic. The primary symptoms of SARS were similar to those of a common flue, where individuals had fever and lethargy contributing to the misdiagnosis of the disease. Thus, when General mass hospital identified it as contagious, many patients had already been infected, hence necessitating measures such as isolation and quarantine. According to Tognotti (2013), these measures are controversial since they raise issues related to the public interest, resulting in protesters who affect the hospital's access to the outbreak. Tognotti (2013) argues that hospitals operate under pressure during outbreaks due to the unavailability of required resources. Thus, the protesters who claim to be blamed for the SARS outbreak might affect the hospital's response due to increased public fault, inability to handle the increased cases and reduced public confidence in healthcare facilities.

SARS necessitates an individual's self-isolation and quarantine to reduce the spreading of the disease. Thus, since the protests result in large gatherings, many people may contract the virus due to congestion. For instance, during the demonstration, if one person has already contracted the disease, he or she can infect others through coughing and physical interactions. Also, the protestors may result in increased media coverage of the situation, where individuals publish articles and blogs about SARS.

References

Tognotti, E. (2013). Lessons from the History of Quarantine, from Plague to Influenza A. *Emerging Infectious Diseases*, *19*(2), 254–259. <https://doi.org/10.3201/eid1902.120312>

**Day 4 (Thursday):**

During the pandemic, healthcare workers work tirelessly, trying to help people. Thus, unions start advising them not to report to work. However, as the mayor of Boston, I can negotiate and meditate with the union and janitor workers by applying necessary leadership skills. Hershkovich et al. (2016) argue that healthcare leaders require effective negotiation and communication skills to agree with their counterparts. I can also negotiate for the recruitment of more nurses and doctors, thus ensuring that healthcare providers get sufficient time to rest. I can also offer an increased salary rate to ensure that they receive compensation for the extra time they work.

References

Hershkovich, O., Gilad, D., Zimlichman, E., & Kreiss, Y. (2016). Effective medical leadership in times of emergency: a perspective. *Disaster and Military Medicine*, *2*(1). <https://doi.org/10.1186/s40696-016-0013-8>

**Day 5 (Friday):**

According to Gonzales et al. (2016), declaring a pandemic a state of emergency affects the situation. It results in individuals' increased tense, thus affecting their physical and mental wellbeing. Also, it stimulates healthcare pressure on handling the issue as many people contract the disease. Lastly, declaring SARS as a state emergency affects Boston's economy. Though the state is a massive hub for travel across the world, individuals may be concerned that SARS will spread significantly and become an international pandemic.

References

Gonzales, A. R., Schofield, R. B., Domingo S Herraiz Director, Richards, E. P., Rathbun, K. C., Corina Solé Brito, & Luna, A. (2006). *The Role of Law Enforcement in Public Health Emergencies*. https://www.ncjrs.gov/pdffiles1/bja/214333.pdf

**Day 6 (Saturday):**

In conclusion, the provided information indicates that the SARS mortality rate is 300 among 3100 confirmed cases. Thus, the mortality rate for people aged 24 years and below is 1%, 6% for 25-44 years, 15% for 45-64 years, and more than 50% for those aged 65 and above. Therefore, the overall mortality rate is about 0.6% but can rise as high as 33% in some areas. According to Hwang et al. (2007) study, a contagious disease-related mortality rate becomes significant if it impacts the death rate in a given area during, after, and before the SARS outbreak. Thus, one can conclude that the recorded mortality rate is significant due to the high percentage of death rates in this period and the increased number of cases, especially in tight-knit communities and families unable to access healthcare services.

References

Hwang, S. W., Cheung, A. M., Moineddin, R., & Bell, C. M. (2007). Population mortality during the outbreak of Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome in Toronto. *BMC Public Health*, *7*(1). https://doi.org/10.1186/1471-2458-7-93

**Day 7 (Sunday):**

To answer the question of whether the mayor of Boston should be replaced, it is important to understand that some individuals carrying the SARS virus are totally asymptomatic. If the mayor presents severe symptoms, it would be necessary to find a replacement and assign the mayor's duties to someone else who is well qualified.

Following the chain of command and the incident command system, the appropriate person will be chosen in case the mayor needs to be replaced. The incident command system “provides responders a way to coordinate emergency efforts through a common, flexible, and scalable command structure that organizes response under four major sections: operations, planning, logistics, and finance/administration” (hsaj, 2018).

I would carefully monitor and evaluate my abilities to continue serving the city of Boston as a mayor during the pandemic. Though, with the new technological advancement, I might be able to continue some of my mayoral responsibilities virtually using platforms like zoom if my symptoms are not aggravated. I will seek assistance if necessary.

References

Coordination in Crises: Implementation of the National Incident Management System by Surface Transportation Agencies. (2018, September 12). Retrieved August 11, 2020, from https://www.hsaj.org/articles/13773