

# PRESS RELEASE



For immediate release: Thursday, 7 May 2009

## ENSURE FLU PANDEMIC PLANS IN PLACE, URGES MDDUS

General medical practices that don't have full contingency plans for pandemic flu should get them in place urgently, warns the Medical and Dental Defence Union of Scotland (MDDUS).

"Even if the current swine flu outbreak fails to develop into a major pandemic, it should serve as an urgent reminder that practices must have specific contingency plans for such an event," says Dr George Fernie, head of the medical division of the UK-wide MDDUS.

MDDUS is urging all general medical practices without specific flu pandemic contingency plans urgently to consult relevant guidance documents and put policies in place to mitigate both health and medico-legal risks. "It's not too late to agree crisis plans – especially if swine flu may hit again harder in the autumn. This crisis is a wake-up call," adds Dr Fernie.

The Royal College of General Practitioners and the BMA's General Practitioners Committee have produced comprehensive guidance to help medical practices develop such plans. Other guidance is available from the Department of Health.

In September 2008 the journal *Management in Practice* published the results of a survey on risk management in which it found that 38% of practice managers reported having no specific contingency plans in place in the event of flu pandemic. It may be that some of these practices have subsequently formulated plans but if not the current crisis should serve as a wake-up call.

"Planning for a pandemic now could allow GPs to limit how many people suffer from flu and the number of deaths that result," says Dr Fernie. "Non-flu patients will benefit, too."

Ends

For further information contact Mike Hutchinson on 020 7624 6257 or 07760 155216.

### Notes to editors

1. MDDUS is a medical defence organisation providing access to professional indemnity and expert medicolegal advice for doctors, dentists and other healthcare professionals throughout the UK. For further information on MDDUS go to [www.mddus.com](http://www.mddus.com).
2. Useful links include [RCGP Pandemic and Flu Planning – including Preparing for pandemic influenza: Guidance for GP practices](#) and [Department of Health - Pandemic flu - National Framework and supporting guidance](#).