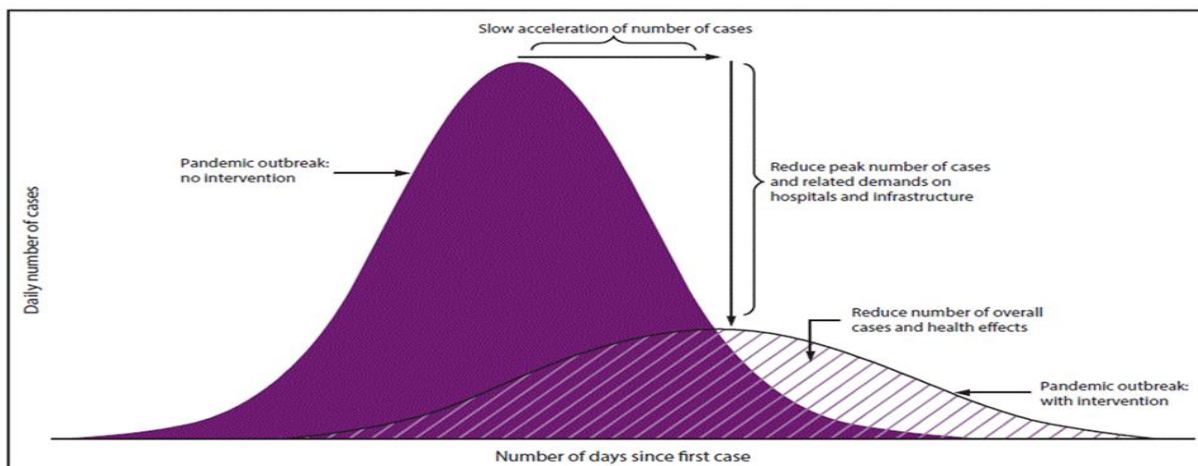


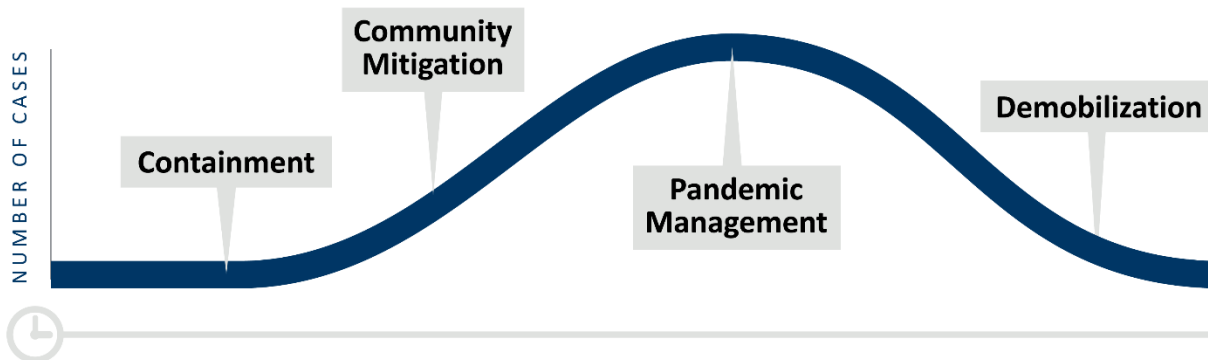
## Purpose of Pandemic Intervention

Quick and continued action during a disease outbreak slows the speed at which the disease spreads and reduces the overall number of people who become ill. This can help reduce the demands on the health care system at any specific point in time, which makes it easier to deliver needed care to those who develop serious illness.



## Phases of Pandemic Intervention

Over the weekend of February 22-23, the global characterization of the COVID-19 outbreak changed. With sustained community spread in several countries including Korea, Italy and Iran, the virus became global in reach. As we prepare for cases it is helpful to think of a disease outbreak in phases:



### Containment:

**National:** This is used to prevent the disease entering the U.S. and is only practiced when a disease is geographically isolated. In this case, the Federal Government limited travel from China and screened all inbound travelers. Now that the disease is spreading in multiple countries, we need to expand our approach.

**State and Local:** When cases are identified, state public health officials work to isolate the patients in order to prevent spread to other individuals. Some states, those with identified cases, are in this phase. Other states, including Minnesota, will move to this phase as cases are identified.

When our first Minnesota case is identified we ensure the individual receives care and is isolated. We follow up on all contacts this individual had where transmission was likely. These contacts will be monitored and their movement may be restricted.

**Community Mitigation:** Once the disease is spreading in a community to people who are not known contacts, mitigation strategies are used to limit the exposure of community members.

- As always, we will ask ill people to stay at home. This public health recommendation is even more important in the setting of an outbreak of a new communicable disease. Measures that can be used to decrease and slow the spread of the virus in the community involve limiting public interactions. This is often referred to as social distancing. It may encompass temporarily closing schools, canceling large community events and gatherings, and asking meetings and faith services to be conducted virtually. Some or all of these measures may be used in particular geographic areas.

**Pandemic Management:** Once the disease is widespread throughout the state strategies focus on resource management.

- We will continue to encourage self-isolation, good hygiene (hand washing, covering your cough), and we will monitor for community clusters. Our focus moves to management and tracking of scarce resources. We work with health care providers to implement a “Crisis Standard of Care” framework. This framework includes everything from delaying elective surgeries to setting up emergency beds and rationing supplies. In a worse-case scenario this includes rationing of life saving equipment and dealing with mass fatalities.
- Annually, we practice pandemic management of seasonal influenza by encouraging self-isolation and hygiene, tracking cases and clusters and working with health care in monitoring hospital bed availability.

Currently there are no identified cases of COVID-19 in Minnesota. However, we anticipate this will change. Our response is based upon the current situation or phase we are in. Simultaneously, we are planning for the next phases.

## How much will COVID-19 spread?

The situation is evolving. We learn more about the virus every day. It is likely we will have people who develop COVID-19 in Minnesota and we may have widespread transmission in our communities. It is also possible that we will have deaths. It is important that we prepare ourselves for this potential while we work to prevent it and limit impacts.

The severity of an outbreak is based upon:

1. How severe (virulent) is the disease? COVID-19 ranges from mild and likely asymptomatic in some cases to more severe disease and death. The severity seems to be associated with the age and health of the individual infected, with older persons and those with medical conditions having more severe disease. However, overall COVID-19 appears to be less severe than SARS and MERS, and more similar to influenza.
2. How transmissible is the disease? We are still learning but it appears to be a little more transmissible than influenza.

COVID-19 is a concern for several reasons:

1. It is a new virus, no individual or herd immunity exists.
2. At this time there is no vaccine.
3. At this time there are no antivirals approved for use against COVID-19.

Updated 2/27/2020