

Important Health Notice

Information for Healthcare Professionals pH1N1 UPDATE

October 14, 2009
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This Important Health Notice (IHN) is based on current information received to date and provides the following:

- Status of the Pandemic (H1N1) 2009 virus (pH1N1)
- Information on updated guidance documents issued by the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care (MOHLTC).

Status Update:

After a general decline in influenza activity between June and the end of August, it is anticipated that pH1N1 will become the predominant circulating strain in the fall and winter of 2009/2010 and will be more prevalent. Seasonal influenza is expected to circulate to a lesser degree, potentially later in the winter. During the 2009 flu season in parts of the southern hemisphere, pH1N1 accounted for about 80% of influenza cases and seasonal influenza for only 20%.

Once established in Ontario, reporting case level data on the number of lab-confirmed pH1N1 will be of little utility. Rather, health care providers are encouraged to view the Ontario Influenza Bulletin to identify the extent of influenza activity in their community. This is available at:

http://www.health.gov.on.ca/en/ccom/flu/h1n1/pro/flu_bulletin.aspx.

pH1N1 Guidance for Healthcare Providers:

Over the summer months, a considerable amount of planning has been done in anticipation of a resurgence of pH1N1.

Highlights:

- Case level pH1N1 data will no longer be reported via the Important Health Notice
- Updated clinical guidance is now available for:
 - Long-Term Care Settings;
 - Ambulatory Care Settings, and
 - Emergency Departments.
- Healthcare providers should continue to monitor the ministry's website for guidance that will be forthcoming

This planning has resulted in a number of guidance documents and other materials that will be made available in the coming days and weeks. Healthcare providers are encouraged to monitor the ministry's website and to register directly to receive IHNs. Instructions on how to do this can be found below.

Three guidance documents are available on the ministry's website. Healthcare providers are encouraged to review this information and adapt their activities accordingly:

- Guidance for Management of Patients with Influenza-like Illness in **Long-Term Care Settings**
- Guidance for Management of Patients with Influenza-like Illness in **Ambulatory Care Settings**
- Guidance for Management of Patients with Influenza-like Illness in **Emergency Departments**

These guidance documents include information on:

- The current epidemiology of pH1N1
- Individuals who are at risk of infection and complications
- Prevention measures
- Infection prevention and control and occupational health and safety
- Clinical assessment and diagnosis
- Laboratory testing recommendations
- Algorithms for assessing and treating patients with ILI
- Considerations for pregnant women.

These documents are available on the ministry H1N1 website in the section for Health Care Providers at: <http://www.health.gov.on.ca/en/ccom/flu/h1n1/pro/>

Additional guidance for other settings will be forthcoming. Please keep your contact information for Important Health Notices up-to-date and to monitor the ministry's website for updates and further guidance. Health care providers can register for Important Health Notices through email and/or fax at: <http://www.PublicHealthOntario.ca>

We also encourage all healthcare providers to ensure that their own planning is in place for a second wave of pH1N1 in addition to the impact of seasonal influenza.

Healthcare Provider Hotline:

If you are a healthcare worker and have any questions or concerns on the Important Health Notices and related guidance documents, please call the Health Care Provider Hotline toll-free at 1-866-212-2272*.

Hours of Operation**:

Monday-Friday 0900hrs to 1600hrs
 Saturday-Sunday CLOSED**

*This hotline is intended to provide guidance and support to health care workers only and is not a service to provide general information to the public

**Hours of Operation are subject to change. Please monitor future Important Health Notices for changes

**On-call services are available for urgent issues, and can be reached through the Healthcare Provider Hotline

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