

How will I be kept informed during an influenza pandemic?

FACT SHEET FOR HEALTH CARE PROVIDERS

This fact sheet provides an overview for health care providers about access to accurate and timely information that will help them respond to challenges during a pandemic.

What will be the sources of information on which I can rely during an influenza pandemic?

In the event of a pandemic, as with any health emergency, your supervisor will be a helpful source of information for you. In addition, joint health and safety committees or health and safety representatives may be a conduit of information to workers. Some health organizations may also establish a command structure to focus resources and activities on the response and often designate a specific function to support communications within the organization.

What are the governments' roles and responsibilities for communications?

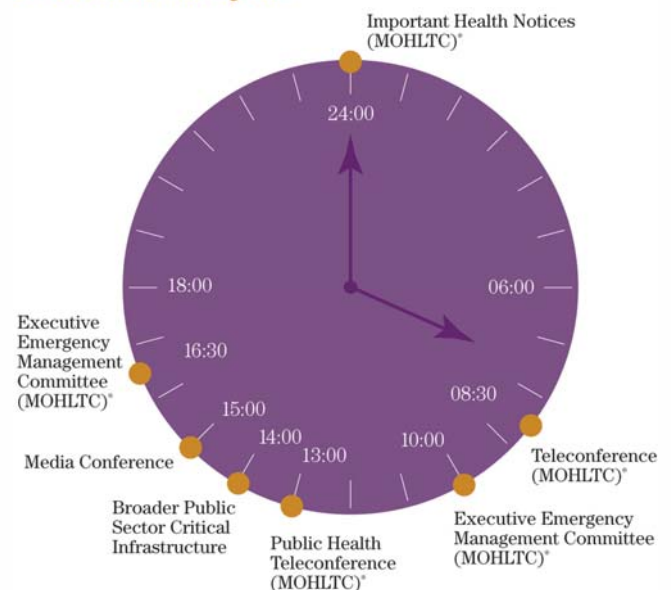
During an influenza pandemic, there are many organizations that play a role in maintaining a streamlined, effective communication system.

At the **federal** level, the Public Health Agency of Canada is responsible for communicating with key international organizations, such as the World Health Organization, about outbreak activity internationally and ensuring that the provinces and territories are provided with current scientific information as soon as it becomes available (i.e., mode of transmission, case definition, etc.). This information will be

critical to informing decisions regarding Ontario's response to the pandemic.

At the **provincial** level, it is the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care's role to ensure that information and direction for the health care system is transparent, accessible, accurate and timely. To ensure that information reaches health care providers quickly, multiple venues will be used, including consultations with regulatory colleges, professional associations/organized labour and provincial employer associations to ensure that this information reaches front-line health care providers quickly and that key messages are consistent at all levels. As a result,

Information Cycle



the ministry has developed a Daily Information Cycle for a Health Emergency to ensure health care provider provincial associations receive regular timely reports and that information is disseminated and briefings are conducted at pre-determined times each day.

It is the responsibility of those provincial associations on the daily ministry teleconference to ensure mechanisms are in place to disseminate information to their member organizations (i.e., website, fan-out e-mails, teleconferences, standards and guidelines, etc.). Members of these associations are similarly required to ensure that these mechanisms are in place to ensure that information reaches their employees.

For the individual health care provider, there is a personal and professional responsibility to be aware of credible sources of information that include:

- The ministry's website:
www.health.gov.on.ca/pandemic
- INFOline: 1-866-801-7242
- Joint health and safety committees or health and safety representatives
- Employer websites, newsletters, teleconferences, board postings, etc.

At the **municipal** level, public health units are leading the coordination of local pandemic plans for the health care system. Mechanisms for communicating with local health organizations will vary according to each public health unit's plan. It is important that you understand what mechanisms are in place for your community before a pandemic emerges; therefore, you should contact your local public health unit for more information.

To find out which public health unit serves your community, visit the ministry website at:
www.health.gov.on.ca/english/public/contact/phu/phuloc_mn.html

What mechanisms will the ministry use for communications during a pandemic?

The ministry has developed a number of communications mechanisms and tools, including:

- A crisis communications toolkit for the health care sector. The toolkit is available on the ministry website and is included in the Ontario Health Plan for an Influenza Pandemic in Chapter 12A. Here is the link:
www.health.gov.on.ca/english/providers/program/emu/pan_flu/ohpip2/ch_12a.pdf
- Stakeholder and provider fact sheets both prior to and during a pandemic. The fact sheets can be found at:
www.health.gov.on.ca/pandemic
- Distributing Important Health Notices (IHNs) advising health care providers and other stakeholders of emerging and existing issues and providing direction regarding the response. IHNs will be sent to over 30,000 health care providers and organizations via e-mail and/or fax and will be posted daily on the ministry's website at midnight as part of the Daily Information Cycle and more frequently if needed. An archive of previous IHNs is posted on the ministry's website at:
www.health.gov.on.ca/english/providers/program/emu/ihn.html

For more information

Visit our website at:

www.health.gov.on.ca/pandemic

Or call

INFOline 1-866-801-7242

* Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care