



# The Pandemic Planner

A Monthly Newsletter for Health Care Professionals

~Special Edition~

Emergency Management Unit, Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care

July 2007

We are pleased to share that the 2007 iteration of the Ontario Health Plan for an Influenza Pandemic (OHPIP) was released on July 25, 2007. As in previous years, the 2007 OHPIP is the result of the hard work, dedication and commitment of members of the provincial Steering Committee, Sub-committees and Working Groups – a collaboration comprised of over 400 stakeholders and representatives from the health, labour and government sectors.

This latest issue of the *Pandemic Planner* is a special edition. It is dedicated to highlighting the key enhancements and new sections of the OHPIP, including public health measures, cancer care, paediatrics and obstetrics and more! The July 2007 *Pandemic Planner - Special Edition* and the 2007 OHPIP will help you build on your pandemic planning activities – in your organization, sector and community.

~ Allison J. Stuart, Director, Emergency Management Unit

## What's New?

### ***Ontario Health Plan for an Influenza Pandemic – 2007***

The summer is here and with it the 2007 OHPIP has been released. The year's plan builds on the community focus of the 2006 OHPIP, and includes key enhancements such as:

- Public health measures;
- Identification of equipment, supplies and staff for Alternate Assessment, Treatment and Referral Centres (flu centers);
- Guidelines for care of persons with cancer;
- A comprehensive paediatrics and obstetrics strategy;
- Guidelines and checklist for Emergency Medical Services (EMS);
- Guidelines and checklist for mental health and addiction services; and
- Occupational Health and Safety Measures and Infection Prevention and Control.

In addition, the 2007 plan incorporates the precautionary principle which will be applied to decision making regarding personal protective equipment (PPE) for health workers when there is an immediate risk to health and when there is scientific uncertainty.

The 2007 OHPIP is available online at: [www.health.gov.on.ca/pandemic](http://www.health.gov.on.ca/pandemic) and can be downloaded in its entirety or by individual chapter and/or planning tool. We encourage you to access the plan for your ongoing planning purposes. Highlights of some of the key updates, enhancements and new guidelines are featured below.

### ***Public Health Measures – Managing the Spread of Influenza Pandemic: Chapter 6***

We know that during an influenza pandemic the role of local health providers will be critical in effectively managing as well as reducing the spread of illness, morbidity and mortality. Unique to this year's plan is the inclusion of a severity-based (mild, moderate and severe) approach to public health measures. This section includes recommendations on

specific public health measures to implement, as well as identifies the "triggers" for action in accordance with the level of severity.

This chapter also reemphasizes the authority to use and enforce public health measures and the importance of collaborative decision-making and consultation between the Chief Medical Officer of Health and local medical officers of health.

Please ensure you review this important chapter so that your ongoing planning and preparedness efforts are informed and align across the province. Please visit chapter 6 at: [www.health.gov.on.ca/pandemic](http://www.health.gov.on.ca/pandemic).

### ***Influenza Assessment, Treatment and Referral Centres (flu centres): Chapters 11 & 11A***

What's new for flu centres? This year's plan includes a number of enhancements for flu centre planning and preparedness. Chief among the enhancements are the inclusion of a comprehensive list of supplies and equipment, funding processes and procurement roles and responsibilities.

Funding for flu centres will be provided by the province. The Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care will cover all expenses, including costs associated with procuring equipment and supplies required directly for flu centre operation. Details will be developed in the coming year.

Another enhancement to this section of the plan is the inclusion of a more robust guideline/model for flu centre staffing. The purpose of the refined staffing model is to further support local planners in health human resources planning and to help ensure that staffing resources are optimized during an influenza pandemic.

The competency-based staffing model offers scalability and flexibility in relation to the specific needs of individual communities and the population during an influenza pandemic.

This staffing model will also be used by the province to estimate equipment and supply needs (particularly for PPE) for flu centres across Ontario. Please visit [www.health.gov.on.ca/pandemic](http://www.health.gov.on.ca/pandemic) to access chapters 11 & 11A.

---

### ***Cancer Care Ontario – Draft Pandemic Planning Clinical Planning Guideline: Chapter 17A***

Thanks to the dedication and commitment of Cancer Care Ontario, the 2007 OHPIP includes its first-ever planning guideline for persons with cancer who do not have influenza but require cancer treatment and/or services. The process for patients with influenza symptoms or urgent medical (non-cancer) issues will be as per the local pandemic plan.

This guideline provides a system to determine a priority for consultation and treatment of patients with cancer in order to provide a consistent approach across the province. This priority classification has been developed to assist cancer programs in the management of patients referred with a cancer diagnosis.

The guideline recognizes that local or regional circumstances and available resources may influence a cancer program's ability to follow the criteria. If some regions are hit harder than others, a re-referral system is recommended for patients with potentially life threatening or rapidly progressing cancers.

With the development and inclusion of this important guideline, Ontario is once again a leader in pandemic planning and preparedness and recognizes the uniqueness of this patient population. Please visit [www.health.gov.on.ca/pandemic](http://www.health.gov.on.ca/pandemic) to access chapter 17A.

---

### ***Paediatric Services: Chapters 18 & 18A***

In June 2007, the Canadian Paediatric Society (CPS) released its second report on public policy and child and youth health (**Are We Doing Enough?**). We are pleased to share that Ontario has received an "excellent" rating by the Society for our 2006 OHPIP and the work on pandemic planning and paediatrics: Paediatric Services, chapter 18, OHPIP 2006. (To access the CPS report, visit: <http://www.cps.ca/english/index.htm>.)

In recognition of the unique issues and challenges of providing care for children, youth and pregnant women during an influenza pandemic, the OHPIP Steering Committee has built upon the 2006 plan by incorporating a more robust and comprehensive paediatrics and obstetrics strategy in the 2007 OHPIP.

The paediatrics and obstetrics strategy highlights factors that may affect and impact care during an influenza pandemic, as well as the ways to plan for and address the specific health needs, infection prevention and control, education and psychological supports for children, youth and pregnant women. This chapter provides the tools and strategies for health planners and providers as well as for parents and other caregivers.

The ministry will be releasing fact sheets on this important area of planning. Be sure to access chapters 18 & 18A at: [www.health.gov.on.ca/pandemic](http://www.health.gov.on.ca/pandemic) and watch the "What's New" section for the release of the fact sheets.

---

### ***Mental Health and Addiction Services and Emergency Medical Services: Chapters 15 & 15A and 16 & 16A***

As featured in previous issues of the *Pandemic Planner*, the 2007 OHPIP includes new chapters and tools to support and guide pandemic planning in community-based mental health and addiction services and emergency medical services (EMS).

Chapters 15 & 15A provides additional guidance to the EMS sector to ensure service delivery plans align with the OHPIP as well as with municipal and local inter-agency plans. A pandemic planning checklist for this sector is also included.

Chapters 16 & 16A include guidelines that help address some special planning challenges related to community-based mental health and addictions services, including the diversity of service provided and the variety of settings in which they are offered. As with the EMS section of the plan, a planning checklist is included. To access chapters 15 & 15A and 16 & 16A visit: [www.health.gov.on.ca/pandemic](http://www.health.gov.on.ca/pandemic).

---

### ***Occupational Health and Safety Measures and Infection Prevention and Control: Chapter 7***

Chapter 7 of the 2007 OHPIP has been updated through the collaborative efforts of the Ministry of Labour and key health sector stakeholders. This chapter focuses on the importance of occupational health and safety and infection prevention and control in preventing the spread of influenza in health settings; as well as protecting the health of patients, their families and health workers.

Enhancements include information on the regulatory framework and legislative requirements of occupational health and safety in a health setting, detailed roles and responsibilities, the risks of influenza transmission, the importance of PPE and the hierarchy of controls by pandemic period.

The chapter and its recommendations on PPE are based on the precautionary principle as set out by Justice Campbell in the final report of the Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS) Commission that was released in January 2007. Please ensure you review this section of the 2007 plan so that continued planning activities align across the province. Please visit [www.health.gov.on.ca/pandemic](http://www.health.gov.on.ca/pandemic) to access chapter 7.

---

## **You Asked....?**

- The decision regarding antivirals for prophylaxis use continues to be reviewed at the national level.
- OHPIP 2007 is posted online and can be downloaded in its entirety or by individual chapter or tool. This web layout worked very well for the 2006 plan, and through statistics gathered since January 2007, the plan, chapters and tools are accessed on average 23,000 times per month!

### **Useful Resources Online**

The Centres for Disease Control's "**Interim Pre-pandemic Guidance: Community Strategy for Pandemic Influenza Mitigation in the United States**" is available online at: [http://www.pandemicflu.gov/plan/community/community\\_mitigation.pdf](http://www.pandemicflu.gov/plan/community/community_mitigation.pdf)

To learn more about the Incident Management System, visit the following online resources:

[http://www.osha.gov/SLTC/etools/ics/what\\_is\\_ics.html](http://www.osha.gov/SLTC/etools/ics/what_is_ics.html)  
<http://www.emsa.ca.gov/Dms2/heics3.htm>  
<http://www.ualbanycph.org/pinata/phics/default.cfm>

Note: the above links may take time to download.