

May 23, 2003

## QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

- Q1. Why are paramedics in the Greater Toronto Area (GTA) being directed to wear full personal protective equipment (PPE)?**
- A1. The nature of the paramedic role is to respond to situations where limited patient history is available (e.g. travel history, signs, symptoms). The use of personal protective equipment will provide protection to the individual paramedic, and to the health care facilities where they bring patients.
- Q2. Are paramedics outside of the GTA also required to wear PPE?**
- A2. At this time, the area of concern is the Greater Toronto Area. The Central Ambulance Communication Centres (CACCs) outside of the GTA will be asking additional screening questions to ascertain the level of risk, and the appropriate PPE requirements.
- Q3. Have the screening questions for health care facilities been modified in response to the identification of additional patients under investigation?**
- A3. Yes. The screening questions will include the following:
- Fever alone must be considered as a sign of potential infection, and should be considered even in the absence of other signs or an epidemiological link. The presence of fever alone must precipitate the introduction of respiratory precautions.
  - Individuals must be asked if they have been to St. John's Rehabilitation Hospital or North York General Hospital (Leslie Site) between the dates of April 22 - May 23, 2003. (see attached Urgent Notice—May 23, 2003 for details)

The local Public Health Unit should be contacted as appropriate.

**Q4. Are staff permitted to work at more than one health care site?**

A4. The following directives apply to staff mobility

- At category 0 and 1 health facilities, staff movement is unrestricted.
- At category 2 health facilities, staff working in areas with unprotected exposure to potential SARS cannot work at other facilities or health settings (i.e. community, LTC facilities, hospitals).
- At category 3, staff cannot work at any other facility or health setting. Working quarantine is permitted for essential staff only. Others must be on home quarantine.

**Given the heightened concern regarding SARS at this time, it is strongly recommended that screening of staff be reinstated, and that movement of staff among sites and between health care sectors be limited as much as possible.**

**Q5. Which directives should we be following at this time?**

A5 Compliance with the directives issued May 13, 2003 for your sector is mandatory, with the additional precautions outlined above.