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**For the Attention of
Hospital CEOs, OHA Board of Directors, Infection Prevention
and Control Leads, Occupational Health and Safety leads,
Joint Health and Safety Committee, CACN, Chief HR Officers,
Emergency Department Managers, Emergency Preparedness
and Pandemic Planning Leads**

**From: Greg Shaw, Vice President,
Strategic Human Resources Management Services**

UPDATE pH1N1 Influenza A

Situation Update

As you are likely aware, influenza-like illness activity has been increasing in Ontario. To date, data indicates that pH1N1 is the predominant circulating strain of influenza in the province. The virus has not changed in the degree of severity of illness.

pH1N1 Immunization Program

The pH1N1 vaccine continues to be rolled out to groups identified in the national sequencing recommendation first with local delivery strategies being coordinated through local public health units. Health care workers are in the first sequence and this is a provincial priority.

The province is encouraging all health care workers to get the vaccine; however, the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care (MOHLTC) is also asking for patience in these early weeks as supply is limited.

Access to Supplies and Equipment

The MOHLTC also continues to receive orders for supplies and equipment as part of the initial roll-out, largely to community-based health care providers. Urgent needs for supplies can be directed to the Healthcare Provider Hotline (1-866-212-2272). ***Hospitals are reminded that the stockpile supplies are earmarked for contingency use only. Please use them judiciously and responsibly.***

Access to Antivirals

The deployment of antivirals from the provincial stockpile to Ontario's 3,000+ pharmacies is near completion and the MOHTLC expects that pharmacies will have a baseline level of supply by end of week.

Antivirals from the provincial supply are available for free for Ontarians that need them, as directed in the guidelines for ambulatory care, emergency departments and home care recently released. The stockpile can also be used for post-exposure prophylaxis in limited circumstances such as closed facility outbreaks. Any other use of antivirals – such as for pre-exposure prophylaxis – must come out of the commercial supply at the normal market price.

Flu Centres

A guidance document regarding the process for establishing local flu centres and the provincial reimbursement process will be distributed to public health units and LHINs.

Resources

The MOHLTC is promoting a self assessment tool that is now available on its website. The self assessment tool aims to assist the public to make informed decisions about the care they need, if any. It does not diagnose but a guide for an individual's experiencing signs and symptoms. Based on their answers, the guide will advise them to stay home and get rest, go to the doctor/call telehealth or to the emergency department. It is available at <http://www.health.gov.on.ca/en/ccom/flu/h1n1/public/tools/assessment/default.aspx>

Fact sheets on pregnancy for the public and for employers are also available at <http://www.health.gov.on.ca/en/ccom/flu/>

Guidance for ambulatory care settings, emergency departments, long-term care homes, home care and shelters have been released and posted on the healthcare providers section of <http://www.health.gov.on.ca/en/ccom/flu/h1n1/pro/>

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