



The Pandemic Planner

A Monthly Newsletter for Health Care Professionals

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

September 2006

There is a lot to celebrate since the first issue of the newsletter. In four short weeks since the launch of the *Pandemic Planner*, the provincial pandemic plan has been released, local pandemic plans are being approved and the health care sector and academia are filling our calendars with important and exciting conferences and seminars. September's issue of the *Pandemic Planner* will highlight the good news stories and will profile community initiatives that are key to our on-going efforts for dialogue, discussion and effective pandemic planning.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all of those who provided feedback and shared ideas and suggestions for the newsletter. We received many positive comments and many of the ideas and information shared are included in this issue. Please continue to share your feedback and keep us informed of the exciting activities taking place in your organization and community!

~ Allison J. Stuart, Director, Emergency Management Unit

What's New?

The release of the 2006 Ontario Health Plan for an Influenza Pandemic (OHPIP)

As many of you know, the Ontario Health Plan for an Influenza Pandemic (OHPIP) was released on Thursday September 21, 2006. The plan is available on the ministry's web site at: www.health.gov.on.ca/pandemic.

We encourage you to share with your colleagues, members and stakeholders that the plan is now available online. We hope that the options provided for downloading will make it easier for you to access and use.

Avian Influenza Update

The provincial government has a new website on avian influenza which can be reached directly at www.government.gov.on.ca/birdflu; or through our web site at: www.health.gov.on.ca/english/providers/program/emu/avian/links.html.

A federal/provincial/territorial workshop on human and animal aspects of avian influenza was also held this month. We have been working on a document to support the human health aspects of an avian influenza outbreak. We hope to have the document posted on the ministry's website in the next month.

The Emergency Management Unit (EMU) is growing!

The EMU now has an Office of Public Health Emergency Preparedness. This office will focus its attention on furthering business continuity planning as well as emergency readiness within the ministry's Public Health Division and the broader public health community. The office will work on ensuring integrated planning at the local and provincial levels to maximize health response efforts to any emergency – including an influenza pandemic.

Stay tuned for updates on the work and activities of this team!

Great Lakes Border Health Initiative (GLBHI) Update

The 3rd Annual Great Lakes Border Health Initiative was held on August 24 & 25, 2006 in Dearborn Michigan. Federal, provincial, state (five states) and local public health representatives participated in this two-day conference, where the primary focus was on the importance of cross-border surveillance. Representatives discussed opportunities to further their work together, explore options and improve infectious disease surveillance in all participating jurisdictions.

The GLBHI Steering Committee is completing its work on a plan which will outline roles and responsibilities, protocols and decision-making guidelines for notification of infectious disease outbreaks in participating jurisdictions, including an influenza pandemic.

The document will be presented to members for comment and further discussion in the near future. For more information, please visit the GLBHI web site at: www.michigan.gov/mdch/0,1607,7-132-2945_5104_5279_40279---.00.html

Useful Web Resources

www.osach.ca/ - The Ontario Safety Association for Community & Healthcare web site provides important information about occupational health and safety.

www.publichealthgrandrounds.unc.edu/ - The Public Health Grand Rounds web site offers satellite broadcasts and webcasts which present real-world case studies on a range of public health issues (from infectious diseases to an influenza pandemic). Registration is free and past programs are available to download on the "Archives" section of the site.

You Asked.....?

Personal Protective Equipment:

The ministry will be participating in a federal consensus meeting on the mode of transmission of the influenza virus in a pandemic. This meeting will help inform a provincial position and decision on personal protective equipment. The meeting is scheduled to take place on October 26 & 27, 2006.

Prophylaxis:

The ministry will participate in the federal government's public consultation on prophylaxis. The consultation will help inform a decision on prophylaxis priority groups. The public consultation is expected to begin later this fall.

Decision Tree:

Work is underway to develop an interactive web-based decision tree. This decision tree will allow for the public to enter influenza symptoms on-line. Based on the information provided, the decision tree would inform the individual on what to do, such as go to a hospital, a local community treatment centre, or family physician for treatment.

As the project develops, further updates will be provided.

Influenza Pandemic Antibiotics:

A number of antibiotics have been identified for use in secondary infections during an influenza pandemic. The list includes the following antibiotics (in oral liquid and tablet and intravenous form):

Amoxicillin/ Clavulanic Acid
Azithromycin
Levofloxacin
Vancomycin
Cefuroxime

The ministry will be stocking antibiotics as with other supplies and equipment in preparation for an influenza pandemic.

Local Planning Initiatives

On September 20, 2006, the Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit released its pandemic plan. The plan can be found at:
www.simcoemuskokahealth.org/pdfs/SMDHU_PandemicPlan.pdf

The health unit's plan was used as a framework for the development of the interagency pandemic plan for the health care and emergency response sectors. This interagency plan can be found at:
www.county.simcoe.on.ca/media/emergencyplanningfiles/Pandemic%5FPlan2.pdf

The interagency pandemic plan was a result of a successful partnership with over 40 health care and emergency response agencies in Simcoe County. Congratulations to everyone for a job well done!

Important Dates: September – December 2006

- **October 11, 2006** - Industry Canada is hosting the 2006 Regional Emergency Telecommunications Conference in Toronto. For more information, please call: 905-428-8637.
- **October 19, 2006** - The Centre for the Study of Democracy, Queen's University is facilitating the symposium: "Ethics and Emergencies - Who lives, who dies, who decides and why?" For more information or to register, please visit the web site at: <http://www.queensu.ca/csd/>.
- **November 28, 2006** - An Aboriginal Health Summit will be held by the Government of British Columbia. Details to follow.
- **November 30 & December 1, 2006** - A Pandemic Communications Forum will be held in Toronto. For a complete copy of the agenda please visit: http://www.summersdirect.com/pdf/Pandemic_Communications_Forum.pdf; or call 1-866-869-7969 for further details.
- **December 12, 2006** - The Health Care Network of Southeastern Ontario, Incident Management Committee presents the *Second Annual Southeastern Ontario Emergency Preparedness Symposium*. The theme for this one day event is "Managing the Next Moment!" For more information, or to register, please visit the web site at: <http://seohealthnet.com/>.

Guides & Books

Avian Influenza

The CDC has released new guidelines around avian influenza. To view these guidelines, please visit
<http://www.cidrap.umn.edu/cidrap/content/influenza/avianflu/guidelines/>.

"The Flu Pandemic and You: A Canadian Guide"

Authors Dr. Vincent Lam and Dr. Colin Lee are celebrating the release of their latest book: "The Flu Pandemic and You: A Canadian Guide." **Dr. Lee** is a member of the Provincial Infectious Diseases Advisory Committee (PIDAC) and is the chair of PIDAC's Communicable Diseases sub-committee. **Dr. Lam** is an emergency physician, who has contributed to The Globe and Mail, National Post and Toronto Life Magazine.