



The Pandemic Planner

A Monthly Newsletter for Health Care Professionals

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

October 2006

There is exciting and ground-breaking work happening at the community level, including the development of interagency plans, strategies that focus on maintaining resources and infrastructure, as well as community awareness, education and engagement. October's issue of the *Pandemic Planner* profiles some of the local successes and unique approaches that our colleagues are taking to strengthen pandemic planning and preparedness. This issue will also highlight some of the newly released provincial plans that will support these local initiatives. We hope you find the information useful and encouraging for your on-going pandemic planning efforts and activities.

~ Allison J. Stuart, Director, Emergency Management Unit

What's New?

Provincial Coordination Plan for an Influenza Pandemic

Earlier this month, Emergency Management Ontario released the *Provincial Coordination Plan for Influenza Pandemic* (PCPIP). This plan supports the Ontario Health Plan for an Influenza Pandemic (OHPIP) and addresses pandemic planning issues that focus on maintaining critical infrastructure in communities across the province.

The PCPIP is written in accordance with the Provincial Emergency Response Plan (PERP) and reinforces that emergency preparedness and response begins with the individual community.

We encourage you to review the PCPIP, which can be accessed through the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care's web site at: www.health.gov.on.ca/pandemic

Operational Plan During an Avian Influenza Outbreak in the Domestic Poultry Population(s)

As we shared in the last two issues of the *Pandemic Planner*, the ministry has been working on an operational plan to support and guide a health response to avian influenza in the domestic poultry population.

This plan complements both the Foreign Animal Disease Emergency Response Plan (FADERP) and the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care Emergency Response Plan (MERP).

The draft plan was circulated to key stakeholders for review. Input was received and incorporated in to the final plan, which is available on the ministry web site at: <http://www.health.gov.on.ca/avian>

We would like to thank those who contributed and provided input and we encourage everyone to access this important document.

Local Planning Profiles

Perth District Health Unit

On October 2, 2006, Perth County's first-ever interagency pandemic plan was released by the Perth District Health Unit (PDHU). The plan was developed through the hard work and dedication of key representatives from the local health care sector, the municipality, social service agencies and first responders.

Recognizing the importance of pandemic planning and readiness, the *Perth County Influenza Pandemic Plan* focuses on public health measures, surveillance, vaccination and communications. It also outlines key roles and responsibilities for the many different sectors that are critical to maintaining resources and infrastructure.

As part of a broader preparedness strategy, the PDHU is focusing efforts on public awareness campaigns that include personal hygiene (hand washing, cough/sneeze etiquette, etc.) and the difference between seasonal influenza ("flu") and influenza pandemic – a very common misconception in the general public.

The health unit has also developed an awareness campaign specifically tailored to rural and farming communities – a unique approach to planning and awareness. We encourage you to visit the health unit's web site at: <http://www.pdhu.on.ca/>

Elgin St. Thomas Health Unit

In June 2006, the Elgin St. Thomas Health Unit released its first pandemic plan – the *Elgin St. Thomas Pandemic Influenza Plan Preliminary Report Version 1.0*. This plan is serving as the framework for building pandemic planning, readiness and response in the community.

Through the Health Emergency Advisory Group, the health unit brings together key representatives from a wide-range of organizations and

facilities, including social services, hospitals, first responders, family physicians, funeral services providers and pharmacists. In addition to providing input into the pandemic planning process, the group acts as a forum for discussion and advice on sector specific plans.

The health unit's approach focuses on community responsibility. It encourages sector planning to address infrastructure need. It is also committed to engaging the public in the planning and preparedness process through hosting public information forums. Visit <https://www.elginhealth.on.ca/pandemic/> for more information on this health unit's pandemic planning activities.

Spruce Hill Lodge Pandemic Planning

Spruce Hill Lodge is a retirement residence in South Porcupine. It has taken a proactive approach to pandemic planning and preparedness by stocking up on food supplies as well as personal protective equipment, including gloves, gowns and masks. It also has a generator to keep the facility operational in times of emergency.

The Lodge is also planning ahead for resources and support by working with family members to determine in advance who can care for their loved one, and who can volunteer to assist in the facility during an emergency.

The Lodge encourages other health care facilities to recognize the importance of pandemic planning in the community and is a member of the Timmins Regional Pandemic Planning Committee.

Influenza Pandemic Exercises

An important part of pandemic preparedness is testing plans through collaborative exercises. A number of communities across Ontario are working together to do just that!

- On October 12, 2006, Toronto Public Health tested its pandemic plan through organizing and facilitating a pandemic exercise;
- On October 23, 2006, the Regional Municipality of York held its influenza pandemic exercise: "Operation Flu Ready"; and
- On December 8, 2006, the County of Simcoe and the District of Muskoka are jointly planning a large scale influenza pandemic exercise.

We welcome updates and information on pandemic planning activities in your community and facilities. Please e-mail us at: emergencymanagement@moh.gov.on.ca

You Asked....?

Presentation, Figures and Diagrams:

The 2006 OHPIP presentation is posted on the ministry web site for use by the health care sector and the public. In addition, figures and diagrams are also available for download and use. Visit http://www.health.gov.on.ca/english/providers/program/emu/pan_flu/pa_n_flu_plan.html.

Ministry Web Site:

We continue to receive positive comments and helpful suggestions about the pandemic and emergency sections of the ministry's web site. Work is underway to further improve user-ability such as including a "What's New" feature. As the project develops we will provide further updates.

Seasonal Influenza:

The first limited quantity of the seasonal influenza vaccine was distributed in early October to long-term care homes and hospitals for the immunization of high-risk persons. As more vaccine becomes available, additional shipments will be delivered to health care providers across the province. Vaccination clinics will be held by health units and open to the general public mid-late November.

Important Dates: November – December

- **November 9, 2006** – Mass Evacuation to Rural Communities web cast. Register through the University of Albany's Centre for Public Health Preparedness at: <http://www.ualbanycph.org/>.
- **December 12, 2006** - The Health Care Network of Southeastern Ontario, Incident Management Committee presents: the *Second Annual Southeastern Ontario Emergency Preparedness Symposium*. For more information, or to register, please visit the web site at: <http://seohealthnet.com/>.

Awareness – beyond the traditional

Art for Awareness! In July 2006, "Dreadful Visitations" - an installation - was exhibited at one of Toronto's art galleries. The installation, created by Toronto-based artist Elaine Whittaker, was inspired by the relationship between art and health. Its aim was to provoke thought and bring about awareness to the alarming rate of movement between people, places, animals and micro-organisms and how they intersect with each other.

Plans are underway for other exhibits. Information on dates will be provided when available.



"Dreadful Visitations" ~ Influenza Viruses A, B & C

Education for kids! Many children can be affected by disasters and emergencies. The Canadian Red Cross has developed educational materials that help students learn about disaster preparedness. For more information, visit: <http://www.redcross.ca>

Useful Resources On-Line

<http://www.plosmedicine.org> – The October 2006 issue PLOS MEDICINE includes pandemic planning related articles: "Priority Setting for Pandemic Influenza: An Analysis of National Preparedness Plans" and "Reducing the Impact of the Next Influenza Pandemic Using Household-Based Public Health Interventions".

<http://www.coughsafe.com/index.html> - OtoRhinoLounsburology Productions presents a humorous five minute video designed to encourage people to use cough and sneeze etiquette. This is a very informative site that also includes helpful tips on basic infection control. <http://www.jibc.ca/emergency/default.htm#> - The British Columbia Ministry of Health with the Justice Institute of British Columbia have launched an on-line health emergency management course.

<http://www.ualbanycph.org/> - The University of Albany Centre for Public Health Preparedness is an informative resource that offers real-time web-casts on a broad range of emerging public health issues.