

May 10, 2006

ONTARIO'S INFLUENZA PANDEMIC PLAN

Ontario's Chief Medical Officer of Health and the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care are working with local public health units, primary care providers, hospitals, long-term care homes and home care providers to prepare for an influenza pandemic. These initiatives include:

Developing Emergency Plans

The government has developed the Ontario Health Plan for an Influenza Pandemic, which is aligned with the Canadian Pandemic Influenza Plan. The provincial plan provides specific direction on the roles and responsibilities for all levels of government for preparing and responding to a pandemic, as well as operational direction to the health care sector.

Stockpiling Antivirals, Supplies and Equipment

The government is committed to stockpiling enough antivirals to treat 25 per cent of the province's population, as recommended by the World Health Organization.

The government is also increasing its stockpile of personal protective equipment, such as gowns, masks and gloves, to allow health care workers to continue to provide patient care if a pandemic occurs. The goal is to have three to four weeks of supplies for all Ontario health care workers in order to meet the expected 35 per cent surge in demand.

This supply is in addition to the over 15,000 emergency infection control kits – announced today – that instead of being stockpiled are being distributed to health care providers in advance of a possible pandemic.

Monitoring Flu Activity

The spread of avian influenza in the bird population in Asia, Europe and Africa is being closely monitored. Ministry officials are working with their counterparts in the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs and the Public Health Agency of Canada.

Ontario participates in the federal Flu Watch surveillance system, which monitors circulating strains of influenza in Canada.

In Ontario, the current influenza surveillance system collects case reports from local public health units and laboratories as well as reports of respiratory outbreaks in institutions.

Developing Information for Public and Health Care Providers

Information on pandemic planning in the health sector, including the Ontario Health Plan for an Influenza Pandemic, is available at www.health.gov.on.ca/pandemic. This web site also has information for employers.

Ministry officials have made more than 100 speeches and presentations on pandemic planning. As well, a brochure entitled “What you should know about a flu pandemic” is available on the ministry website in 24 languages.

-30-

Media Contacts:

David Spencer
Minister's Office
416-327-4320

John Letherby
Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care
416-314-6197

Disponible en français.

www.health.gov.on.ca