
NEWS RELEASE

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Ministry of Health

ONE-STOP RESOURCE HELPS B.C. PREPARE FOR A PANDEMIC

VICTORIA – A comprehensive website will help families, communities and organizations prepare for a potential influenza pandemic, Health Minister George Abbott announced today at a technical media briefing.

“Influenza pandemics are generally seen every 10 to 40 years, with the last one in 1968. We don’t know when we might see such an event happen again, but we are working hard to ensure our province and population are prepared to respond,” said Abbott. “This website provides current information and resources to help British Columbians plan, prepare and stay informed.”

The website was developed by the Ministry of Health and the BC Centre for Disease Control, and provides individuals, organizations, businesses and communities with basic information on pandemic influenza, tips on how to stay healthy, contact lists to use during a pandemic, planning suggestions, and provincial, national and international links for pandemic planning. Public information tools on protective health measures are also available for printing and posting to help raise public awareness. A link to the BC Centre for Disease Control 2006 health-care worker educational video entitled *Pandemic Influenza: Prepare for the Worst, Hope for the Best* is also included. Each health authority and health unit is being provided with a copy of the video to help brief and prepare health-care workers.

“Advance preparation is key to helping mitigate the impact of a pandemic if it occurs. That is why we are working now to develop efficient and effective interventions to ensure B.C. is prepared on all levels,” said Dr. Perry Kendall, provincial health officer. “Everyone has a role to play. I would encourage individuals to talk to their neighbours, schools, local governments and workplaces to find out what plans they have in place, and to determine how they can assist.”

The website, video and resource materials are in addition to ongoing work being done by the ministry, the BC Centre for Disease Control and health authorities. This work includes co-ordination on a national level on pandemic preparedness, regional meetings with local emergency responders, municipalities and other interested stakeholders; development of the provincial Pandemic Influenza Preparedness Plan and local health authority plans; establishment of cross-jurisdictional planning committees; and development of guidelines to help local governments, businesses, industry and commerce prepare for such an event.

The provincial pandemic influenza website can be found at: www.health.gov.bc.ca/pandemic

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