

# Pandemic (H1N1) 2009 Influenza A Situation Update for Partners

## Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit

September 25, 2009

The Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care announced that the sequencing of the seasonal influenza vaccine program is being changed for this year. The purpose of this update is to provide the details that we have at this time about the seasonal influenza program.

We will continue to work with and communicate to partners through usual channels to support ongoing planning and updates. If you have questions please contact your regular liaison contact or call *Your Health Connection* at 721-7520 or 1 877-721-7520.

Sincerely,  
Dr. Charles Gardner  
Medical Officer of Health

### ***Vaccine***

#### **Seasonal Influenza Vaccine**

In light of preliminary Canadian research findings that have suggested a potential association between prior seasonal influenza vaccination and the risk of acquiring pH1N1 disease, the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care has made the following recommendations for seasonal influenza vaccine for this year:

- Those persons aged 65 and older and those in long-term care homes receive seasonal influenza vaccine at this time.
- All others delay receiving the seasonal influenza vaccine until after they have received the pH1N1 vaccine.

The best available data at this time on influenza illness for both seasonal influenza and pH1N1 viruses (currently-circulating viruses, risk of acquiring, risk of complications and death) was carefully reviewed by public health officials and practitioners, infectious disease specialists and researchers along with the preliminary research results, to develop these recommendations.

The Canadian research findings show **no** evidence that those who are aged 65 and older and received seasonal influenza vaccine in the past were at greater risk of acquiring pH1N1 disease. There is also **no** evidence that those who received seasonal influenza vaccine and acquired pH1N1 disease were at risk of more severe illness.

*Seasonal Vaccine Distribution* – distribution to physician offices and long-term care homes will be consistent with previous influenza seasons. However, the ordering and distribution will be limited at this time to the supplies needed to vaccinate those patients who are aged 65 and older and those in long-term care homes. We will notify our contacts as soon as the vaccine becomes available for ordering.

The health unit will **not** be offering the schedule of seasonal public flu clinics this fall (Oct/Nov) as we normally do. However, those people aged 65 and older who do **not** have a health care provider will be able to book appointments at the health unit's regular immunization clinics that are held in our offices. Please consult our [website for the locations and schedule of these clinics](#). We will be notifying the public of this change through the media and other communication channels.

Research on the pH1N1 vaccine continues and will guide recommendations for its use. There is no information available at this time on the number of pH1N1 injections (one or two doses per patient) that will be required, or the interval that will be required between receiving it and the seasonal influenza vaccine. It is estimated that the pH1N1 vaccine will be available in November.

*Situation updates are distributed to a broad range of health unit partners including health care professionals, health sector emergency planners, community service providers (including those who work with vulnerable populations), educators and day care providers.*