

Health **FAX**

Widespread Influenza Activity in Simcoe Muskoka

Attention: **Physicians, Long-Term Care Homes, Rest and Retirement Homes, Emergency Departments, Nurse Practitioners, Infection Control Practitioners, Occupational Health Professionals, Walk-In Clinics/Urgent Care Clinics, Neighbouring Health Units, Midwives, Family Health Teams, Pharmacies**

Date: December 20, 2012

Effective December 19, 2012, the Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit issued a declaration of community-wide influenza. Widespread activity as defined by Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care (MOHLTC) criteria is described as “sporadically occurring ILI (Influenza-like Illness) and laboratory-confirmed influenza together with outbreaks of ILI in schools and work sites, or laboratory-confirmed influenza in residential institutions occurring in >50% of the health unit”. The formal declaration, which includes informing the MOHLTC of the local situation, serves as a signal to health care partners of a need to enact policies and strategies to control the further spread of influenza.

Simcoe County and District of Muskoka

There have been six lab-confirmed influenza A institutional outbreaks in Simcoe Muskoka since December 2, 2012. In addition to the 20 outbreak-related cases, there have been 68 sporadic lab-confirmed cases reported as of December 19, 2012. There is one influenza B and the rest are influenza A. The flu A specimens sent for further subtyping have all been H3 and have been an excellent match to the vaccine strain.

Prescribers may experience an increase in persons requesting Tamiflu prophylaxis. For any unimmunized staff working in institutions experiencing confirmed influenza outbreaks, Tamiflu prophylaxis at 75mg once daily until the outbreak is over is recommended and required as per Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care protocols. Canadian guidelines on the use of antiviral drugs for influenza are available at <http://www.ammi.ca/guidelines>.

All lab-confirmed influenza cases and institutional respiratory outbreaks are reportable to public health to ensure timely follow-up. For additional information or to report influenza cases and respiratory outbreaks please contact the Simcoe Muskoka District Health Unit, Communicable Disease Team at (705)721-7520 or 1-877-721-7520 extension 8809.

Public Health Ontario now issues the Ontario Influenza Bulletin which can be accessed at: <http://www.oahpp.ca/resources/flubulletin.html>