

Media Release

Timiskaming Health Unit well positioned to deal with swine influenza

April 29th - for immediate release

The Timiskaming Health Unit (THU) is prepared should a case of swine influenza appear in the district. And, they are working closely with government agencies and community stakeholders to ensure that everything is in place should a pandemic be declared.

As of April 29th, several cases of swine influenza have been confirmed in Southern Ontario and all are considered mild. Individuals are recovering at home. The Public Health Agency of Canada has issued a travel health warning for Mexico recommending against non-essential travel to that country.

Dr. Pat Logan, Acting Medical Officer of Health for the THU, states that “we have an excellent system in place and we’re ready to respond to and deal with this issue”. He adds that the THU is working closely with key stakeholders to ensure that all information and updates from the Ministry of Health are being shared daily with area hospitals, physicians and clinics. Health care workers have been provided with detailed advice on how to manage suspect and/or confirmed cases. “Timiskaming residents can be confident that the Timiskaming Health Unit and health care providers are closely monitoring the situation” adds Logan.

The World Health Organization has advanced its Pandemic Alert to level 5 which means that the THU will activate their pandemic preparedness plan. At this stage, effective and essential measures include heightened surveillance, early detection and treatment of cases, and infection control in all health facilities

The THU recommends that everyone take precautions to decrease their risk of contracting *any* influenza virus by following these important steps:

- Wash hands frequently and thoroughly with soap and warm water, or use alcohol-based hand sanitizer
- Cough and sneeze into tissue covering your nose and mouth then dispose of it – do not reuse or share it
- If you don’t have a tissue, then cough or sneeze in your arm or sleeve
- Practice social distancing techniques: avoid crowds, attempt to stay 3 feet to 1 metre from others, do not shake hands, hug or kiss as a greeting.
- **Stay home if you are sick** especially if you have a fever and have travelled to an affected area.

People who have symptoms of respiratory illness should contact their health care provider and call prior to visiting the office or emergency room.

Timiskaming residents are encouraged to visit the THU’s website at www.timiskaminghu.com to access current and accurate information on this situation.

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