

Media Update

H1N1 Flu Virus

November 9, 2009 - For immediate release



The Timiskaming Health Unit (THU) has expanded its H1N1 flu vaccine clinics to include children up to and including 18 years of age. School-aged children can receive their immunization at school-based clinics being implemented across the district. In addition, a supply of the unadjuvanted H1N1 flu vaccine has been received and health unit offices are currently booking appointments for pregnant women who wish to receive this vaccine.

For the week of November 9, the THU is continuing with planned community clinics to reach the priority groups across our district and will begin delivering vaccine to first responders such as police and firefighters through community clinics or health unit offices, pregnant women and, as a pilot project to expand H1N1 flu vaccine access, elementary and high school students in Timiskaming.

The THU will further broaden its immunization efforts to others as resources allow. Based on the supply of the vaccine, they will be able to immunize everyone who needs and wants it. "We want to give priority groups every chance to be immunized the people most vulnerable to serious outcomes from this flu" says Dr. Pat Logan, acting Medical Officer of Health for Timiskaming.

"We know that the initial rush among the first group of priority populations is slowing down, and that many primary care providers have been putting in the extra effort to make sure that their priority groups have received the vaccine" adds Logan.

According to Ghislaine Julien, Manager of Infectious Diseases Program, as of Nov 6, 2009, the health unit's vaccine distribution to date is as follows:

- 8778 doses administered through THU clinics
- 5300 doses provided to healthcare agencies for healthcare workers, physicians and other vaccine delivery agents

There is no doubt that flu like illness is widespread in the THU area. As of November 6 the THU has received notification of 37 confirmed H1N1 cases. This number underestimates the true number of cases as most illness is mild, will not require medical care and therefore will not require lab testing. Dr. Logan reminds people that the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care's on-line self-assessment tool at Ontario.ca/flu can help people decide what to do when they think they, or their child may have the flu. They may also contact their health care provider or call Telehealth Ontario: 1-866 -797-0000 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

The public can access a complete list of local clinic dates, times and location by visiting www.timiskaminghu.com or calling the THU H1N1 Flu INFOline at 1-866-302-4309

For more information on H1N1, please visit www.ontario.ca/flu or call Service Ontario at 1-800-476-9708.

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