

Pandemic (H1N1) 2009 Influenza Virus Community Information Update

September 21, 2009

Pandemic (H1N1) 2009 influenza virus in Middlesex-London:

Influenza activity remains low in Middlesex-London. Appendix A, found at the end of this update, shows the indicators the Health Unit is using to monitor influenza activity in the community. The most recent laboratory confirmed case of influenza A was reported to the Health Unit on September 16, 2009 with an onset date of September 11, 2009.

To date, the Health Unit has been notified of 23 laboratory-confirmed cases of the new Pandemic (H1N1) 2009 influenza A virus and 31 cases of influenza A which are quite likely to be the new H1N1 strain. It is important to note however, that this total of laboratory-confirmed cases only represents a fraction of the number of people who have been ill with the Pandemic (H1N1) strain. This is because most individuals do not see a health care provider when they develop influenza-like symptoms and health care providers are only testing people with influenza-like symptoms who are hospitalized or have underlying medical conditions. Of the 54 people with laboratory evidence of influenza A, 5 have been hospitalized for short periods of time and none have died.

Current status worldwide:

The table below summarizes the available data from around the world as of September 20, 2009. Please note that the number of laboratory-confirmed cases is a small fraction of the actual number of people who have developed Pandemic (H1N1) influenza infections.

Country	Number of laboratory confirmed cases of Pandemic (H1N1) 2009 influenza virus	Number of reported hospitalization	Number of reported deaths
Worldwide	>296,471		>3,486
Canada		1,459	76
Ontario	4,062	370	23

The Ontario Situation:

In the last month, the level of Pandemic (H1N1) influenza virus activity in Ontario has remained low. As of September 18, 2009, 370 people in Ontario with confirmed Pandemic (H1N1) 2009 influenza infection had been hospitalized. This is an increase of 32 people in the past month.

Of the total number of hospitalized patients since the beginning of the Pandemic (H1N1) influenza situation, 77 people (21%) have been admitted to the intensive care unit and/or placed on a ventilator. Half of hospitalized are under the age of 21 and 67% had an underlying medical condition. In the past month, two people have died of Pandemic (H1N1) influenza, bringing the total number of deaths in Ontario to 23. Half of the people who died were under 56 years of age and 87% had underlying medical conditions.

Source: Ontario Influenza Bulletin – September 18, 2009, Week 36
http://www.health.gov.on.ca/english/providers/program/pubhealth/flu/flu_08/flubul_mn.html

Influenza vaccinations in the fall:

Two influenza vaccines are planned for the fall; one for regular seasonal influenza and the other for Pandemic (H1N1) influenza. The exact dates and mechanisms for the distribution of these vaccines have yet to be determined, pending guidance from the Ontario Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care. Further information on the distribution of both vaccines will be available shortly.

The following provides an overview of what is currently known about the Pandemic (H1N1) influenza vaccine:

- The Pandemic (H1N1) influenza vaccine for Canadians is being produced by GlaxoSmithKline at its manufacturing plant in Quebec.
- The federal government is purchasing 50.4 million doses of the Pandemic (H1N1) influenza vaccine. Of these, 19.5 million doses are for Ontario, which is sufficient to vaccinate 75% of the population with two doses of vaccine, should this be needed. This is estimated to be enough to provide the vaccine to anyone who needs or wants to be vaccinated.
- The Pandemic (H1N1) influenza vaccine is expected to be available in November although when distribution will begin is currently uncertain.
- The Pandemic (H1N1) influenza vaccine will be provided at public health clinics. It is also anticipated that community health care providers, hospitals and long term care facilities will be offered the opportunity to administer the vaccine.
- In the event that primary care providers are busy seeing patients presenting with influenza-like illness, public health is planning to be able to deliver a significant proportion of Pandemic (H1N1) influenza vaccinations in Middlesex-London.
- The Pandemic (H1N1) influenza vaccine is being grown in hens' eggs, which is the mechanism for manufacturing all influenza vaccines used in Canada. The Pandemic (H1N1) influenza vaccine will differ from seasonal influenza vaccine as it will contain an adjuvant. Adjuvants are substances designed to increase the immune response to vaccines. The adjuvant has been well studied in most age groups and no safety concerns have been identified. It is expected that a vaccine without an adjuvant will also be available for pregnant women because the adjuvant has not been specifically studied in pregnant women.
- All vaccines that are used in Canada undergo extensive review by Health Canada to ensure that they are safe and will provide protection. The Pandemic (H1N1) influenza vaccine will undergo the same thorough process which includes review of studies done in animals and people and inspection of the manufacturing facility. Health Canada also tests each batch of vaccine before that batch is allowed to be used in Canada. After the vaccine is in use, monitoring of its safety and effectiveness will continue through the usual mechanisms to monitor vaccines being used in Canada; this mechanism is called "post-marketing surveillance".
- It had been thought that two doses of the Pandemic (H1N1) influenza vaccine would be required to make protection against the Pandemic (H1N1) influenza virus. Recently several studies have indicated that one dose of Pandemic (H1N1) influenza vaccine may result in good protection. No decisions have been made regarding whether one dose or two doses of vaccine will be needed. Additional studies are underway to help make these decisions.

For further information, please contact the Middlesex-London Health Unit at 519-663-5317, extension 2330 or visit our website at www.healthunit.com .

Appendix A

Summary of Influenza Indicators in Middlesex-London

September 17, 2009

General influenza activity in Middlesex-London: low

Indicator	Recent data / trends	Comments
Hospital emergency room reports regarding the percentage of patients with febrile respiratory illness	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Overall, less than 3% of patients presenting to London emergency rooms have had febrile respiratory illness in the previous 8 weeks, although specific sites ranged as high as 5.8%.
Sentinel physicians reports regarding the percentage of patients with febrile respiratory illness	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Three of four participating medical offices have begun submitting information. The percentage of patients reporting febrile respiratory illness on the surveillance day(s) ranged from 0 to 4.4%.
Absence reports from child care centres (i.e. absenteeism > 10%)	None reported recently	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Since the beginning of the summer, 3 child care centres have reported increased absenteeism.
Absence reports from schools (i.e. absenteeism > 10%)	Limited reporting initiated	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> More refined mechanisms have been implemented for monitoring school absenteeism this year, however they are not yet fully implemented Results from a limited number of schools contained no reports of absenteeism > 10%.
Laboratory-confirmed cases	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Since September 11, 2009, one laboratory-confirmed case of influenza A has been reported. This report was received on September 16 and had an onset date of September 11. To date, there have been 23 laboratory-confirmed cases of Pandemic (H1N1) 2009 strain and 31 influenza A positive cases that are quite likely to be the Pandemic (H1N1) 2009 strain.
Long-term care facility outbreaks	None reported	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No long-term care facility outbreaks due to the Pandemic (H1N1) 2009 strain have been reported.
Health unit call volumes	Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The number of people calling the Health Unit related to H1N1 influenza remains relatively low. Over the past 8 weeks, between 1.0% and 7.5% of callers to the Health Unit had questions related to Pandemic (H1N1) influenza.
Hospitalizations	None reported recently	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No hospitalizations with laboratory confirmed influenza have been reported in recent weeks, although 3 patients admitted with febrile respiratory illness have been reported. To date, 5 people have been hospitalized who had laboratory confirmation of the Pandemic (H1N1) 2009 strain or who had influenza A which is quite likely to be the Pandemic (H1N1) 2009 strain.
Deaths	None reported	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No deaths have been reported.