

Influenza Update

July 2009



Prepare to Care

Pandemic Preparedness



Lisa Zetes Zanatta

Fraser Health extends a warm welcome to Lisa Zetes Zanatta, our new Coordinator for Pandemic Influenza and Public Health Emergency Management. Prior to joining FH in April, Lisa worked as the Public Health Pandemic Coordinator for the Ministry of Health Services, and as a Communicable Disease Epidemiologist and Program Manager for the BC Centre for Disease Control.

This year more than ever Fraser Health is concentrating on its Pandemic Planning activities. In light of the recent emergence of Influenza H1N1 (human swine flu) in the population we anticipate a busier than normal flu season this fall. Fraser Health is reviewing and reprioritizing a number of planning activities to ensure its services will be delivered quickly and efficiently in its communities.

What is the status of the H1N1 virus in Fraser Health at this time?

The H1N1 virus continues to circulate at low levels in our population and we continue to see mainly mild illness in those who are affected. A vaccine is not yet available so prevention activities serve as our best defense. Useful tips include hand washing often, the use of hand sanitizer, coughing into your sleeve, and staying at home when you are ill.

Are there plans to make a vaccine for H1N1?

At this time the federal government is considering this very question. To prepare in the event that the decision to immunize the population is made, Fraser Health has begun planning to ensure we are ready to respond with additional supplies and clinic resources.

What planning activities are underway at this time?

Fraser Health's planning priorities are to ensure the effective distribution of Antiviral treatment in the community in the event of an increase of influenza activity in the fall. As well we are working to ensure that the H1N1 vaccines in addition to the routine influenza vaccine can be distributed effectively. We have developed a plan to increase triage capacity in our acute care facilities if it becomes necessary to expand services, and are actively engaging municipalities to encourage a multi-sectoral planning process for all public health emergencies.

If a vaccine for H1N1 is developed will it be included with our routine flu shot this fall?

As the production for this year's flu vaccine was already in production, the H1N1 strain could not be added. A second vaccine would need to be administered to give protection against the new influenza strain. Both vaccines would be required to protect us from all of the circulating strains we expect to see in the fall because the annual flu vaccine will not protect against H1N1 and the vaccine for H1N1 will not protect against any of the other circulating strains.

Are we prepared for a Pandemic?

Fraser Health has been planning for nearly a decade with our health and community partners to ensure that we have a robust and effective health care model to deal with public health emergencies including an influenza pandemic. We are somewhat fortunate with H1N1 as this new virus typically results in mild illness. However regardless of severity; we have plans in place to address supply distribution and increases in the number of patients that will need access to services. Each year our flu immunization campaign and the organization's response to influenza illness gives us an opportunity to exercise our plans and continually improve and refine our response.

For additional questions or information please contact **Lisa Zetes Zanatta, Coordinator, Pandemic Influenza**. Lisa is located at the Corporate office in Surrey and can be reached via email at lisa.zeteszanatta@fraserhealth.ca or by phone at **604-587-7864**, or contact the pandemic planning executive sponsor, **Diane Miller, Executive Director, Health Promotion and Prevention** via email at Diane.Miller@fraserhealth.ca.

