

## Special Communications/Information Bulletin H1N1 and Seasonal Immunization Campaigns

**Date: September 25, 2009**

### Primary Key Messages:

- Ontario will be providing publicly-funded vaccination against both the seasonal flu virus and the H1N1 flu virus. However, there will be a defined rollout process. Ontario's process may be different than other jurisdictions.
- The Ontario Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care will postpone most of the seasonal flu immunization campaign until after the H1N1 vaccination campaign.
- The seasonal influenza vaccine will be available in October (before the H1N1 immunization campaign) for the following groups only:
  - Individuals over the age of 65 years
  - Residents of long-term care homes
- The H1N1 vaccine is expected to be available in November. The vaccine is going to be available to whoever needs and wants it. However, because the vaccine will not all be available at one time, H1N1 immunization will be sequenced (priority targets for immunization will be offered the vaccine first). Refer to — <http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/alert-alerte/h1n1/vacc/vacc-eng.php> for more information on sequencing.  
Those who should receive the H1N1 vaccine first include:
  - Persons with chronic conditions under age 65
  - Pregnant women
  - Children 6 months to 5 years of age
  - Household contacts/caregivers of immuno-compromised and children under 6 months of age (who cannot be immunized)
  - Health care workers (i.e. all health care system workers involved with the pandemic response or delivery of essential health services)
- After the H1N1 vaccine has been rolled out, the seasonal flu vaccine will be available to everyone who is six months of age and over who lives, works or attends school in Ontario.
- There are several reasons for this rollout process:
  - There is emerging, unpublished evidence that shows a possible association between immunization with seasonal flu vaccine and infection with H1N1 flu. It is advised that individuals under the age of 65 wait to get the seasonal flu shot after the H1N1 flu vaccine, until we learn more about this.
  - The vaccine is being offered to those who are 65 years of age and over because they are more likely to develop serious complications and be hospitalized from seasonal flu infection. At the same time, the evidence to date has shown that those born prior to 1957 are generally less likely to be infected with H1N1.
  - Based on evidence from the flu season in the Southern hemisphere, it is expected the H1N1 flu virus will be the main circulating strain this season.
- Based on this new directive, Region of Waterloo Public Health will revise its seasonal and H1N1 immunization strategies. More information will be provided in the near future.

See our regular weekly Communications/Information Bulletin (also issued today) for latest H1N1 surveillance trends and other updates for this week.