

Message from Commissioner/ Medical Officer of Health

It has been one year since Public Health first gathered a group of stakeholders to begin the development of a pandemic influenza plan for Waterloo Region — the Community Pandemic Influenza Preparedness Plan (CPIPP). In that short time a strategic planning framework was developed to guide the planning process, a pandemic-specific website was launched, and a broad-based community engagement process (to finalize the development of the CPIPP) was initiated. Six Working Groups (and two-subgroups), which are guided by a Steering Committee, are currently working to develop the various components of the plan. Over 105 individuals from over 55 different organizations are currently involved in the planning effort.

We are committed to keeping all stakeholders informed of pandemic planning initiatives and future updates will be provided in October and December. We also invite you to share the information in this newsletter with other organizations, your partners and/or your employees.

I thank you for your ongoing commitment and dedication to this planning process.

Dr. Liana Nolan

The Planning Process

Since May 2006, six Working Groups have been meeting to create the tools and guidelines that will be used by individuals and organizations in the influenza pandemic response and recovery effort. The mandate of each group, as well as each Working Group's Chair and Vice-Chair, are listed below:

Acute Health Services

Responsible for developing clinical care tools and guidelines as well as principles regarding the deferral of care in acute (hospital) settings.

Chair: Dr. Daniel Kollek,
St. Mary's General/

Grand River Hospitals

Vice Chair: Lydia Chudleigh,
St. Mary's General Hospital

Community Health Services

Responsible for determining how to assess, treat and care for patients in the community rather than in acute settings.

Co-Chair: Kim Voelker,
Community Care Access Centre
of Waterloo Region

Co-Chair: Marianne Kraemer,
Community Care Access Centre
of Waterloo Region

Community Support

Responsible for devising mechanisms and strategies that will assist individuals who are least able to access services and supports so they will receive basic necessities during a pandemic event.

Chair: Mike Schuster,
Region of Waterloo

Vice Chair: Karen Charles,
Canadian Red Cross Society

Occupational Health & Safety and Human Resources

Responsible for developing pandemic-specific health & safety, infection control & prevention, and human resources guidelines for the health care sector.

Chair: Vacant

Vice-Chair: Susan Toth,
Cambridge Memorial Hospital

Equipment and Supplies

Responsible for planning for equipment and supply needs (storage, distribution, allocations, etc.) for the health care sector during all phases of a pandemic event.

Chair: Brenda Lanteigne,
Grand River Hospital

Vice-Chair: Leah Gibson,
Community Care Access Centre
of Waterloo Region

Emergency Management

Responsible for determining measures to ensure the provision of critical infrastructure and the coordination and preparation of services needed to maintain public safety and order.

Chair: Mike Murray,
Region of Waterloo

Vice-Chair: Don Smith,
City of Cambridge

Crisis Communications

Responsible for developing a number of pandemic-specific communications tools and processes that can be activated during a pandemic event.

Chair: Bryan Stortz,
Region of Waterloo

Vice-Chair: Lu-Ann Procter,
Region of Waterloo Public Health

It is anticipated the Working Groups will finalize their materials in November 2006. Once finalized, the Steering Committee will reconcile them into one coherent response plan. It is anticipated the draft plan will be distributed for stakeholder approval in January 2007 and released to the public in Spring 2007.

'Tool Kit for Business Continuity'

During an emergency there is a general expectation from the public (and from employees) that services will continue as usual.

However, during an influenza pandemic, organizations may find it difficult to maintain service given absenteeism rates and potential disruption to supply chains. To ensure some level of operation during an influenza pandemic, public, private and not-for-profit organizations will be required to implement business or service continuity plans.

In May 2006, Region of Waterloo Public Health, in cooperation with the Ministry of Economic Development and Trade, hosted a pandemic planning workshop. At this session, business, legal and communication experts made organizations aware of the issues that need to be considered as they begin to prepare pandemic-specific plans. In addition, Region of Waterloo Public Health launched its 'Tool Kit' for Business Continuity, a starting point that can help guide organizations as they begin to develop their own plans.

All materials from the session are available on the pandemic website — www.waterlooregionpandemic.ca. Additional materials, from a variety of sources, on business continuity have also been posted.



Waterloo Region's Pandemic Website

Looking for information pertaining to an influenza pandemic and pandemic planning? Region of Waterloo Public Health, in collaboration with some community partners, developed a pandemic-specific website — www.waterlooregionpandemic.ca. The website will be continually updated as resources become available so add it to your website bookmarks!

Provincial Update

Emergency Management Ontario released interim Influenza Pandemic Guidelines for Municipal Emergency Management Programs. The guidelines provide direction on the creation of pandemic-specific response plans, including the roles and responsibilities for municipalities, emergency responders, Social Services and Public Health.

In Summer/Fall 2006, the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care is expected to release the second iteration of the Ontario Health Plan for an Influenza Pandemic. Building on the initial plan, this version will provide additional guidance and direction on the use of Alternate Assessment and Treatment Centres, health human resources (the potential role for volunteers, competency-based planning, etc.), public health measures (e.g. social distancing) and other topic areas. The OHPIP can be downloaded at http://www.health.gov.on.ca/english/providers/program/emu/pan_flu/pan_flu_plan.html

If you have any questions or comments, or if you wish to be added to our newsletter distribution list, please e-mail Region of Waterloo Public Health at publichealth@region.waterloo.on.ca

For more information, visit Waterloo Region's pandemic website at www.waterlooregionpandemic.ca