

Important Health Notice

October 22, 2009

Information for Community-based Healthcare Providers and Long-Term Care Homes Volume 6, Issue 19
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pH1N1 – Access to Supplies & Equipment

This Important Health Notice (IHN) provides information for community-based health care providers and long-term care homes regarding access to infection control supplies and equipment from the provincial stockpile.

Status Update

Global and domestic demand for some healthcare supplies and equipment has increased since the emergence of pH1N1. As a result, healthcare providers and organizations in Ontario have had difficulty acquiring certain products through normal supply chains.

The Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care is facilitating access for healthcare providers to the provincial stockpile of infection control supplies and personal protective equipment (PPE). Due to specific constraints experienced by some sectors, some community-based healthcare providers and long-term care homes will be provided access first, followed by other healthcare providers and organizations.

The provincial stockpile is intended for contingency use only. The ministry is urging healthcare providers and organizations to acquire supplies first from existing suppliers. The provincial stockpile should only be accessed when this is not possible. Because the provincial stockpile is of finite quantity, everyone is requested to use these supplies in a responsible and judicious manner to ensure that supplies can be channelled to those who need them most.

Highlights:

- The ministry is facilitating access to the provincial stockpile of supplies and equipment to assist in the healthcare system's response to pH1N1
- Community-based healthcare providers and long-term care homes will be provided access first, followed by other healthcare organizations
- Healthcare providers are strongly urged to use the stockpile judiciously to ensure supplies are available for those who need them most
- Instructions for supplies at or near expiry in Emergency Infection Control Kits

How To Access the Stockpile

It is recommended that each healthcare organization identify one individual and at least one alternate to order supplies from the provincial stockpile on behalf of the organization.

A user manual and list of available supplies can be downloaded at www.health.gov.on.ca/poms. Note: some healthcare providers, such as family physicians, will have a "kit" accessible to them with pre-stocked supplies whereas other providers will order from a list of available supplies.

There are two ways in which healthcare providers and organizations may access the provincial stockpile: i) by Internet and ii) by fax.



By Internet

If you are from one of the following groups, you may access supplies through the ministry's on-line Pandemic Order Management System (POMS) at this time. Other groups will be added at a later date:

- Community Health Centres
- Long-Term Care
- First Nations health service providers
- Physicians
- Public Health Units

The POMS website is www.health.gov.on.ca/poms

You will require a unique identifier to access the system, such as an institution number, facility number, or CPSO registration number. Please see the user manual for further instruction on the ordering process.

By Fax

If you are from one of the following groups, you may access supplies at this time, followed by other groups to be added at a later date. If you are included in the list below you are to fax your order completed form to **905-738-8129**

- Nurse Practitioners
- Emergency Medical Services
- Alternate influenza assessment, treatment and referral centres ("flu centres")

The fax order form is available at the following website: www.health.gov.on.ca/poms. If you cannot access the form through the internet, please contact the Healthcare Providers Hotline at 1-866-212-2272. Please see the user manual for further instruction on the ordering process. Complete faxed order forms are to be sent to **905-738-8129**.

Emergency Infection Control Kits

In 2007, the ministry provided Emergency Infection Control Kits to 15,000 community-based healthcare providers. Two products inside these kits are either near or at expiry. If these kits are still in tact, healthcare providers who received them are instructed to:

- Open the Emergency Infection Control Kit
- Extract the surface cleaner/disinfectant wipes (2 containers). If after expiry, please discard following normal discarding practice. If before expiry, add to normal product circulation and order new product through the POMS

- Extract the hand sanitizer (6 bottles). If after expiry, please discard following normal discarding practice. If before expiry, add to normal product circulation and order new product through the POMS
- Close and re-seal the Emergency Infection Control Kit for use when necessary.

For More Information

For other questions related to the stockpiling program, please contact the ministry's Healthcare Provider Hotline at 1-866-212-2272*.

Hours of Operation**:

Monday-Friday 0900hrs to 1600hrs

Saturday-Sunday CLOSED**

*This hotline is intended to provide guidance and support to healthcare workers only and is not a service to provide general information to the public.

**Hours of operation are subject to change. Please monitor future IHNs for changes.

**On-call services are available for urgent issues and can be reached through the Healthcare Provider Hotline.

(original signed by)

Dr. Arlene S. King
Chief Medical Officer of Health

(original signed by)

Phil Graham
A/Co-Director, Operations
Emergency Management Branch

(original signed by)

Tiffany Jay
A/Co-Director, Policy and Planning
Emergency Management Branch