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Pandemic Influenza Update

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FROM:

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Pandemic Influenza Update

The Canadian Pandemic Plan and the Ontario Health Pandemic Influenza Plan (OHPIP) set the broad policy framework for pandemic influenza planning for local public health. Currently Peel Health is updating the Peel Public Health Pandemic Influenza Plan, first released in 2002. The revised plan is scheduled for release in the summer of 2006.

Peel Health is engaging key stakeholders for pandemic planning to ensure a collaborative and coordinated regional approach, including local physicians. As such, you will soon be receiving further communication from my office outlining our next steps including physician consultation forums, in which we will provide updates on our planning activities and address any questions or concerns you may have.

Physician Enumeration Reminder

On December 21, 2005, Peel Health sent MOHLTC Pandemic Enumeration kits to all Peel physicians with a **deadline of January 20, 2006**. If you or your practice group has not received this package, please call Peel Health immediately at **905-799-7700**. If you have received this package but have not yet returned it, please submit this information immediately. It is important that your information is included for effective anti-viral distribution planning. As always, we encourage you and your staff to undertake proactive business continuity planning in the event of a pandemic influenza outbreak or other emergency.

Status of Avian Influenza

Current Avian Influenza (H5N1) affected areas¹ with confirmed cases of human Avian Influenza

¹ As reported by the Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC) and the World Health Organization (WHO)

include: Cambodia, Thailand, Vietnam, Indonesia, China and most recently Turkey. In Turkey, there have been 4 confirmed human cases and 2 deaths² (all cases had close contact with poultry). Transmission is still bird to human spread (WHO Phase 3 Pandemic Alert Period). The emergence of the H5N1 virus for the first time in Europe has resulted in very close monitoring of the virus for signs of drift and shift.

Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC) Statements

No travel advisories have been issued at the present time, however PHAC recommend continued vigilance for surveillance, recognition reporting and prompt investigation of patients with unexpected outcomes of severe influenza-like illness (ILI) who have **recently visited H5N1 Avian flu-affected areas**. Severe ILI may include complications such as pneumonia, Acute Respiratory Distress Syndrome (ARDS), encephalitis and other severe life threatening complications requiring hospitalization or resulting in death of otherwise healthy individuals.

PHAC recommends that **travelers to affected areas** get their annual flu-shot, avoid unnecessary contact with domestic and wild poultry, only eat well cooked poultry and avoid raw egg products. As always, travelers are encouraged to maintain high standards for hand washing. For more information, please visit: www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/h5n1/index.html.

For further information, please contact Dr. Hanif Kassam, Medical Officer of Health, or Dr. Megan Ward, Associate Medical Officer of Health at 905-791-7800.

² As of January 25, 2006, World Health Org. (WHO)