

The County of Peterborough
Joint Services Steering Committee

To: Chair and Members of Committee
From: Bob English, Chief, Emergency Medical Services
Date: May 14, 2009.

Subject: H1N1 Influenza Update

Recommendation: That pandemic supplies are purchased as needed and that reconciliation is prepared at year end to determine if a funding transfer is required from the City/County Reserve; and further, that the remaining balance of pandemic supplies is inventoried at December 31, 2009 and that a payback amount, if any, to the City/County shared reserve be determined for the 2010 and future budgets, if deemed necessary.

Financial Impact: 2009 EMS Budget and potentially EMS Shared City/County reserve

Background/Analysis:

The MOHLTC and the Ontario Agency for Health Protection and Promotion were contacted on April 20th by the Public Health Agency of Canada regarding a number of severe respiratory illness (SRI) cases occurring in various locations of southern and central Mexico.

The cases in Mexico presented with influenza-like symptoms that rapidly progressed to severe respiratory distress in about 5 days, with many requiring mechanical ventilation. Some patients have died. Most cases have occurred in previously healthy young adults aged between 25-44 years old. Some health care workers have been affected.

Given the severity of cases, it is prudent for front line providers to actively look for cases of SRI, particularly in persons recently returned (within 2 weeks) from Mexico, and report information to the local health authorities.

Included with this report is an information package prepared and issued to all EMS personnel on April 30th. This information has also been shared with our allied agencies within the County.

Lindsay CACC is screening all calls for patients showing signs and/or symptoms of SRI. Upon confirmation that a patient meets the screening tool criteria for SRI, it is mandatory

for Paramedics to wear full personal protective equipment (PPE) for droplet precautions that includes gloves, N95 mask, protective eyewear and gowns.

The Shift Superintendents have ensured that adequate quantities of PPE are available for all personnel. Upon completion of a call of a suspected SRI, the crew will return to Peterborough Base to decontaminate the vehicle, its contents and their clothing before returning to service. In addition to usage of PPE and decontamination, all personnel are regularly reminded to conduct thorough hand washing. In this effort, sanitized lotion dispensers are being installed in every vehicle, equipment bag and provided to every Paramedic to be carried on their belt to ensure hand sanitation is constantly available.

Regarding the current EMS stock of PPE and pandemic supplies, it is mandated through regulation by the MOHLTC that a three month supply is maintained. It is te desire to increase this inventory to a six month supply.

Financial Impact:

Funds may need to be drawn from the EMS Shared City/County reserve that currently funds Emergency Response Vehicle purchases, iMedic vehicle laptop computers, County Server (and other IT requirements), and Defibrillator replacements. A review at year end of pandemic transfers would be completed to determine the amount (if any) that needs to be returned to the reserve in 2010 or phased-in over a few budget years.

Also included with this report is a copy of a recent bulletin released by the Office of the Fire Marshall to all fire services in Ontario. This bulletin contains very good information; however, I am concerned with comments appearing on page 4 under “Accessing EMS Supplies”. Currently, the EMS budget only provides funding for the supply and stocking of PPE and pandemic supplies for EMS, not other first responder agencies within the County. As the stock of PPE and pandemic resources for the Peterborough City POLICE and FIRE are currently very low, it may be necessary (in the event of an outbreak being declared) to access the EMS City/County reserve to also provide resources to these two City agencies. A report is being prepared for the JSSC meeting being held on May 14th to address these concerns.

As the case may be, in 2003 with the outbreak declaration of SARS by the MOHLTC, it was ordered that EMS provide all first responder agencies with all PPE and pandemic supplies during the outbreak with 100% costs being born by the MOHLTC. I have asked the MOHLTC if this may be the case in the event of a declared outbreak for the H1N1 influenza and their answer was inconclusive, however, this may be a possibility. Presently we are carefully tracking any expenditures relating to this initiative.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be a stylized 'R' or similar character.