

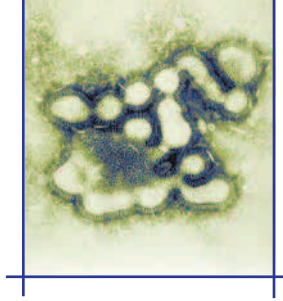
# Emergency Planning for the Future



Issue 1 - March 2005 York Region Health Services Department

## Pandemic Influenza

According to **Dr Klaus Stohr**, the World Health Organisation's top influenza expert, the warning signal has never been clearer that we may be on the cusp of the next pandemic.



The Influenza Pandemic is expected to originate in Asia and could reach Canada within three months. The impact on populations would be significant. Based on statistical modelling (FluAid 2.0 software), approximately 311,000 residents in York Region could be clinically ill. This would place an overwhelming burden on the health care system, including overcrowding of hospitals and shortages of medical supplies.

Although the actual timing and impact of the next influenza pandemic is difficult to predict, the time for preparedness planning is now.

### What is Happening on the Global Scene

The World Health Organisation (WHO) and Public Health experts in Canada are concerned that the Avian influenza virus (H5N1) that has affected eight countries in Southeast Asia has the potential to unleash the next Influenza Pandemic. Experts fear the virus could mutate to a form that would spread rapidly among humans. There are two striking features about how this particular virus has affected humans to date:

- concentration in previously healthy children and young adults
- high mortality rate (46 of 69 confirmed human cases have died as of March 23 2005 ).

### Preparations for a Pandemic

In March of 2004, The World Health Organization brought 100 experts from 33 countries together to draft priority public health interventions for an influenza pandemic. This forum highlighted the importance of cooperation between countries in the preparedness planning process.

**Dr. K. Helena Jaczek**, Commissioner of Health Services and Medical Officer of Health for York Region, has initiated a planning process that involves Directors / Managers and staff from the Health Services Department as well as staff from key regional departments representing Emergency Management, Human Resource Services, Community Services and Housing, Finance, Supplies and Services, Corporate Services, Corporate Communications, Finance, Transit and Transportation and Works.

Preparations are underway for orientation and training for all staff to occur during 2005 and 2006. To book a presentation, contact Sandra Vessel at **905-830-4444 ext 3578**.

### Questions to the Editor

*How would an influenza pandemic be different from SARS?*

An influenza pandemic may be different from the SARS epidemic. The incubation period (the time between exposure and onset of symptoms) for influenza is 2-3 days, while the mean incubation period for SARS was 5 days (with a range from 2-10 days). Influenza may be difficult to distinguish from other respiratory diseases as their symptoms are similar (fever, headache, muscle aches, cough, sore throat). The key difference between SARS and an influenza pandemic is the virulence of the organisms: a person infected with influenza will transmit the virus to many more people than a person infected with the SARS coronavirus. Statistical modelling based on previous influenza pandemics estimates that 133,000 to 311,000 people in York Region may become ill during an influenza pandemic as opposed to the 88 who contracted SARS.

### Three Degrees of Disease

#### Outbreak:

A localized epidemic, defined by a more limited geographical area.

#### Epidemic:

An increase in cases of a disease in excess of what is normally expected within a defined community or region.

#### Pandemic:

An epidemic that has spread over several countries or continents, usually affecting a large number of people.

**Chair**

Dr. K. Helena Jaczek, Commissioner of Health Services and Medical Officer of Health

**Co-Chair**

Dr. Hanif Kassam, Associate Medical Officer of Health and Director, Public Health Programs

**Co-ordination Support**

Sandra Vessel, Emergency Planning Specialist  
Christine Gimbly, Administrative Support

**Administration Sub-Committee**

**Chair:** Marilyn Woolhead, Director, Business Services

**Co-Chair:** Tony Fernandes, Director, Program Development and Budgets, Emergency Medical Services

Mark Critch	Jeff Schmidt
Christy Tosh	Dorina Vial
Pina Lerullo	Elizabeth Dunn-Boylen

**Communications Sub-Committee**

**Chair:** Jennifer Churchill, Director, Community Development Branch

**Co-Chair:** Patrick Casey, Director, Corporate Communications

Andrea Collins	Raj Khetarpal
Kim Clark	Cathy McSorley
Michelle Herder	Tim Paleczny
Becky Hester	Deb Wood
Jeanette McGregor	

**Health and Safety Sub-Committee**

Teresa DuCroix - Interim Chair, Health and Safety Consultant, Corporate Services  
Wendy Kirkos, Co-Chair, Manager, Healthy Lifestyles Division

Ann Koch	Marg McGibbon
Nancy Paterson	Irene Wu-Lau
Wendy Kirkos	Brian Hall
Mona Mahdy	Tiziana Alonzi
Debbie Hinton	Lee Snow
Gloria Kostiuk	Robert Kerr

**Intelligence Sub-Committee**

**Chair:** Bill Mindell, Director, Infectious Diseases Control Division

**Co-Chair:** Rebecca Metcalfe, Director, Healthy Lifestyles Division

Diane Bladec-Willett, Director, Health Information and Planning Branch

Nadine d'Entremont	Maria Kavanagh
Helen Doyle	Shelley Stalker
Roseanne Fenwick	Sandra Vessel
Popy Graham	Susan Wood
Guy Hall	

**Liaison Sub-Committee**

**Chair:** Shawn Turner, General Manager, LTC & Seniors Branch

**Co-Chair:** Gord McEachen

**Members:**

Brad Meekin	Cathy McSorely
Karen Hay	Darwin Trojan
Popy Graham	John Molyneaux
Naomi Wachowiak	Grace Volkening
Catherine Edl	Jenny McKay
Amy Chui	Brenda McPherson

**Thanks to previous Chairs:**

Russ Smye  
Mary-Ann Green

**Logistics Sub-Committee**

**Chair:** Joanne Armstrong, Manager, Administrative Services, Business Services Branch

**Co-Chair:** Anita Eveleigh, Director, Child & Family Health Division and Chief Nursing Officer

Bernadette Searle	Rita Foscarini
Fae Chen	Robert Townes
Connie Wilson	Susan Gilbert
Doug Bertrand	Tom Appleby
Gary Cosgrove	Cherrie-Marie Chiu
Gwen Robinson	Judy Kates
Joanne Anderson	Stan Gal
Lynn Harris	Jennifer Johnston-Heikamp
Maria Kavanagh	Anna Spinello
Megan Bosworth	Dima Stolarsky
Penny Brathwaite	Kimberly Gray

**Operations Sub-Committee**

**Chair:** Joe La Marca, Director, Health Protection Division

**Co-Chair:** Gord McEachen, Director, Operations, Emergency Medical Services

Joey-Anne Davidson, Manager, Infectious Diseases Control Division

Amy Hlaing	Guy Hall
Barb Clement	Judy Kates
Mary-Ellen Procher	Donna Swan
Cathy McSorley	Morris Faccin
Joanne Anderson	Natasha Vrhovnik
Helen Doyle	

This newsletter is prepared on behalf of the Commissioner of Health Services and Medical Officer of Health for York Region. It will be distributed periodically throughout the year.

Please send your questions or suggestions for articles to the editor - [sandra.vessel@york.ca](mailto:sandra.vessel@york.ca) or 905-830-4444 ext 3578

