2008 Ontario Health Plan for an Influenza Pandemic
About Influenza

- Influenza is a contagious respiratory illness caused by a group of viruses: influenza A, influenza B, and influenza C (type C rarely affects human health)
- Common symptoms of influenza include fever, headache, aches and pains, fatigue and weakness, stuffy nose, sneezing, sore throat, cough, and nausea, vomiting, and diarrhoea (in children)
- Seasonal influenza (flu) is caused by influenza A and B viruses
  - Outbreaks follow predictable seasonal patterns and occur annually, usually in winter, in temperate climates.
  - Results in mild to severe illness, with deaths often caused by complications (such as pneumonia)
- An influenza pandemic is a global disease outbreak of the influenza A virus
  - Occurs rarely (three times in 20th century - last in 1968)
  - Spreads easily and rapidly through many countries and affects a large percentage of the population
  - Symptoms may be more severe and complications more frequent
- Influenza pandemics arise when all four of the following occur:
  - A novel influenza A virus emerges
  - The new virus can spread efficiently from human to human
  - The new virus causes serious illness and death
  - The population has little or no immunity to the new virus
Why Plan for an Influenza Pandemic?

Global Context

- Although no one can predict when the next pandemic will occur, public health experts/organizations - including the World Health Organization - have warned that an influenza pandemic is overdue.
- Asia, Africa, and Europe are currently dealing with outbreaks of highly pathogenic H5N1 virus in domestic poultry and wild birds.
  - H5N1 has raised concerns about a potential human pandemic due to fear that potential mutations that could result in sustained human-to-human transmission.

Ontario Context

- Ontario will have little lead time between when a pandemic is first declared in the world and its spread to Ontario.
- During pandemic, the health system will be overwhelmed and there will be societal disruptions.
- Appropriate pandemic planning can reduce:
  - The number of people infected
  - The amount of illness and number of deaths
  - The amount of socio-economic disruption
- Every jurisdiction must be prepared to mobilize resources quickly and effectively to limit the impact of an influenza pandemic.
Ontario Health Plan for an Influenza Pandemic

• To support the health system prepare for a pandemic, the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care has led the development of the Ontario Health Plan for an Influenza Pandemic (OHPIP)
  • Plan is updated annually with input from experts representing all three levels of government; public health, infectious diseases, and infection control experts; clinicians; and labour unions, professional associations, and healthcare sector regulatory bodies
  • 2008 version of the OHPIP is the fifth iteration of the plan
• The goals of the OHPIP are:
  • To minimize serious illness and overall deaths through appropriate management of Ontario’s health care system
  • To minimize societal disruption in Ontario as a result of an influenza pandemic
• The OHPIP is based on a four-pronged strategic approach:
  • Be ready – Plan at provincial and local levels in advance of a pandemic
  • Be watchful – Active screening and monitoring to identify the earliest signs of an influenza pandemic
  • Be decisive – Manage the spread quickly and effectively
  • Be transparent – Communicate with Ontarians
Plan Overview: Key Features

- Aligns with strategies/plans from the international and national levels
  - Adheres to World Health Organization pandemic phases (inter-pandemic phase, pandemic alert phase, and pandemic phase)
  - Follows planning assumptions and direction in the Canadian Pandemic Influenza Plan
- Emphasizes the importance of occupational health and safety and infection prevention and control in health settings
  - Provides guidance on the use of personal protective equipment
- Details federal, provincial, and local roles and responsibilities
- Includes an ethical framework for decision-making
- Focuses on enhancing health system readiness, including guidance on stockpiling supplies and equipment
- Guides the community response and includes a number tools designed to support effective local planning and preparedness
- Continues to be updated and improved with emerging clinical, epidemiological, and operational information
Plan Overview: Key 2008 Enhancements

- New details on surveillance and reporting systems to monitor a pandemic
- Updated information on occupational health and safety and infection prevention and control measures
- Revised guidance to support the implementation of mass immunization clinics
- More details on the organization and delivery of influenza-related primary care services, including updated information on early assessment, treatment and referral strategies
- Updates to planning guidelines for laboratories, paediatric services, and long-term care homes
- Planning guidelines for the provision of chronic kidney disease/acute kidney injury services
- Guidance to assist hospitals in planning for potential blood shortages
- Outline of a chapter on psychosocial supports to guide planners in implementing psychological assistance programs for health workers and the public/patients they serve
Plan Overview: Structure

The 2008 OHPIP is organized into three parts:

| Part I: The Context for Planning for an Influenza Pandemic | – Provides basic information about influenza and summarizes the impact that an influenza pandemic would have in Ontario  
– Presents an overview of goals, objectives, and strategic approach of the OHPIP |
|---------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Part II: System-Wide Issues, Activities, and Tools      | – Outlines activities and strategies common to all health settings, such as surveillance activities, public health measures, occupational health and safety and infection prevention and control guidelines, health human resources planning, supplies and equipment, and communications  
– Describes community-level strategies to assess, treat, and provide referrals for patients with influenza-like illness |
| Part III: Setting-Specific Issues, Activities, and Tools | – Outlines activities and strategies for specific health settings, including public health, laboratory services, emergency medical services, community health care, acute care, paediatric services, and long-term care homes |
Additional Resources for Health Workers

The Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care’s influenza pandemic website at www.health.gov.on.ca/pandemic contains a variety of resources and information on pandemic planning.

What you should know about a flu pandemic

An influenza (flu) pandemic spreads easily and rapidly through many countries and regions of the world.

Talk of an influenza pandemic has occupied the media of late. During the 20th century, the world faced two flu pandemics. The most deadly, the “Spanish Flu”, killed over 20 million people in 1918 and 1919.

Public health experts tell us that another flu pandemic could happen anytime. They also tell us that if we are prepared, we can reduce the number of people who become infected and the number who die.

And since pandemic flu spreads the same way as seasonal flu — through droplets contained in sneezes and coughs and by hand contact, basic precautions can greatly reduce its spread.

It’s important to note that an influenza is not the same as an influenza pandemic. Information on avian influenza is available here.
Additional Resources for Health Workers (cont’d)

The ministry has developed a series of Pandemic Fact Sheets for Health Care Providers that outline communication mechanisms, roles and responsibilities, and the provincial response strategy to an influenza pandemic. These are available through the Information for: Health Care Providers link on the ministry’s influenza pandemic website at www.health.gov.on.ca/pandemic.
Additional Resources for Health Workers (cont’d)

The ministry circulates the Pandemic Planner, a monthly newsletter for health care workers, to provide information and updates on pandemic planning and related activities at the federal, provincial, and local levels. The newsletter is distributed and accessible on the ministry’s influenza pandemic website.
Additional Resources for Health Workers (cont’d)

The ministry recently released the **OHPIP Personal and Family Care module**, an interactive e-training program created to educate health professionals/staff in health settings on how to take care of themselves and their family during an influenza pandemic. Visit the ministry’s influenza pandemic website at [www.health.gov.on.ca/pandemic](http://www.health.gov.on.ca/pandemic) to access this resource.

![Diagram of the OHPIP Personal and Family Care module](image-url)
Resources for the General Public

The ministry has developed a brochure entitled What You Should Know About an Influenza Pandemic and a series of Pandemic Fact Sheets for the General Public in order to educate Ontarians about pandemic influenza. All these materials are available online at www.health.gov.on.ca/pandemic.
## Pandemic Planning in Other Sectors

A number of plans that have been developed to support pandemic readiness for other non-health sectors in Ontario:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Plan</th>
<th>Details</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Provincial Coordination Plan for an Influenza Pandemic</strong></td>
<td>- Released by Emergency Management Ontario in 2006</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Outlines roles and responsibilities of provincial ministries, including requirements to support the MOHLTC’s response</td>
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<td><strong>Influenza Pandemic Planning Guidelines for Municipalities</strong></td>
<td>- Released by Emergency Management Ontario in 2006</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Supports municipalities develop pandemic response plans for critical infrastructure sectors</td>
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<td><strong>Pandemic Planning Guide for the Ontario Public Service</strong></td>
<td>- Released by the Ministry of Government Services in 2008</td>
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<td>- Outlines pandemic preparedness roles and responsibilities within the Ontario Public Service</td>
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<td><strong>Ministry of Community Safety and Correctional Services Influenza Plan</strong></td>
<td>- Released by the Ministry of Community Safety and Correctional Services (MCSCS) in 2008</td>
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<td></td>
<td>- Outlines the processes and strategies required to fulfill the roles and responsibilities assigned to MCSCS in the Provincial Coordination Plan for an Influenza Pandemic, as well as to ensure continuity of ministry critical services</td>
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Key Websites

• Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care
  Pandemic influenza: www.health.gov.on.ca/pandemic
  Avian influenza: www.health.gov.on.ca/avian
  Emergency planning and preparedness: www.health.gov.on.ca/emergency

• Public Health Agency of Canada
  Canadian Pandemic Influenza Plan: www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/influenza/pandemicplan_e.html

• Government of Canada
  Pandemic influenza: www.pandemicinfluenza.gc.ca

• World Health Organization
  Influenza: www.who.int/csr/disease/influenza/en/
Contacts

• Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care – Emergency Management Unit
  Email: emergencymanagement.moh@ontario.ca
  Healthcare provider hotline: 1-866-212-2272 (toll free)
  Employers’ hotline: 1-866-331-0339 (toll free)

• Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care – Media Line
  Email: media.moh@ontario.ca
  Phone: 416-314-6197 (in Toronto) or 1-888-414-4774 (toll free)

• Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care – General information requests
  Email: infoline.moh@ontario.ca
  Phone: 1-866-532-3161 (toll free)
  TTY: 1-800-387-5559 (toll free)