

MISSION *Services* Opportunity Centres

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Pandemic Planning RESPONSE

...as of October 20, 2009



The purpose of this handbook is to provide up to date information to employees of Mission Services of Hamilton about our response to the H1N1 Pandemic.

The information contained in this handbook is based on current information. Revisions will be made as they are required.

It is your responsibility to inform yourself of Mission Services current Pandemic Alert Level. The ways to do this are explained in this booklet.



Mission Services of Hamilton is committed to a safe and healthy workplace for all employees.

The pandemic flu was declared by the World Health Organization (WHO) in June 2009 due to the emergency and quick spread of the H1N1 (Swine) flu virus.

The current H1N1 Pandemic is a new strain of influenza virus that is expected to spread quickly worldwide. It is carried and spread among humans and there is little or no immunity against it. It is expected that there will be 2 or 3 waves of the pandemic lasting from 3 months to 12 months.

The H1N1 flu is a respiratory flu. It is transmitted through droplets during coughing, sneezing and talking. Precautions can be taken to prevent the spread of this virus. Please read the precautions section of this booklet for information on how to stop the spread of the flu.

Public Health strongly recommends and encourages all individuals to have a flu shot. When a vaccine does become available it will be in short supply and high demand.

Workplaces need to prepare a plan that allows for normal business operations to continue when many people will be sick or absent. Please read this booklet and keep in a safe place at home. If you have any further questions about the

pandemic or our response, please speak to your Director or our Human Resources Manager.

Mission Services has responded to the declared pandemic in a number of ways:

- Hand sanitizers have been installed at all facilities.
- Hand hygiene procedures have been communicated to all staff.
- Fit testing of N95 masks have taken place for the appropriate staff (If you have not been tested, please notify your Director as soon as possible).
- Masks and gloves for staff and clients have been ordered.
- Policies have been implemented to respond to the pandemic and future needs.

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Background on influenza:

What is influenza?

Influenza, more commonly known as the flu, is a highly contagious respiratory illness caused by a virus.

What is pandemic?

A pandemic is distinguished by its scope. It becomes a worldwide epidemic, or *pandemic*, when a disease spreads easily and rapidly through many countries and regions of the world and affects a large percentage of the population where it spreads.

How does an influenza pandemic start?

The viruses that cause influenza are constantly changing. A pandemic starts when a new strain of influenza virus emerges that is different from common strains of influenza. Because people have no immunity to the new virus, it can spread quickly and infect hundreds of thousands of people. Pandemic influenza strains often develop when an animal or bird virus mixes with a human virus to form a new virus.

What is the contagious period?

Influenza can be contagious for 24 to 48 hours before any symptoms arise and for five days after the onset of symptoms. This means you could spread the virus without knowing you are infected.

In response to the Pandemic, Mission Services has put together a simple system that allows for all staff to know what the status of the pandemic is and how they are to respond.

Mission Services has created internally, four levels to the status of the pandemic. All facilities will post the level of pandemic and this information will also be updated on our website.

Pandemic Level Identification

How will I know the current Pandemic Alert level? How will I know what to do?

During the pandemic all staff will be able to monitor the pandemic level at Mission Services in a number of ways:

1. **Signage** - Programs will keep an up-to-date posting of the current pandemic level using colour coded signage.
2. **Call in procedure** – staff may call 905-528-4211 (Wait for the prompt) to find out the current status of the pandemic and when and where they are to report to work.
3. **Website** – Mission Services website will have up-to-date information and current status of the pandemic for employees.
4. **Leadership** – The Leadership of MSHI are committed to communicating with their staff all latest updates and procedures.

What if I have the Flu?

Any employee that contracts the flu is asked to remain home from work for 3 days after the onset of symptoms if they receive treatment and 7 days after the onset of symptoms if they do not receive treatment. The treatment is an anti-viral and it will be in short supply. Ontario is processing enough anti-viral to treat approximately 25% of the population.

What if I have to stay home to care for those with the flu or children if their school is closed?

Any employee who needs to provide care for family members who need care as a direct result of the pandemic outbreak may use your Emergency Leave days as set out in the Employment Standards Act. During a declared emergency, the 10 day cap on these days is removed.

Will I be paid during my absence?

Mission Services has a sick policy for all staff. During personal sick days, employees will be paid from their accrued sick bank. The policy also enables paid sick time to be used for emergency leave days. If any

employee does not have any sick time accrued to cover an absence caused by the pandemic; they will be allowed to use up vacation time. If you do not have vacation time left in the current year, you will be allowed to use up to 2 weeks of your accrued vacation time for the upcoming calendar year. For employees who do not have sick time or vacation time accrued, you may be issued a Record of Employment to apply for Employment Insurance Sick Benefits with Service Canada.

What if Mission Services shuts down in a declared Pandemic Emergency?

During Pandemic Alert Level – Red:

Staff will be laid off from employment until Mission Services is able to re-open. Human Resources will provide Records of Employment for all laid off staff so that they may apply for Employment Insurance Benefits through Service Canada.

All benefit premiums will be paid by Mission Services during the lay-off period. Employees will be phoned by their supervisor to indicate when business resumes and the report to work date.

Standard Precautions:

Standard Precautions are a simple, consistent and effective approach to Infection Control that reduce the risk of transmission of infection diseases, regardless of suspected or confirmed infection status, in any setting in which care/service is delivered.

Standard precautions are based on the principle that all blood, body fluids, secretions, excretions except sweat, non-intact skin, and mucous membranes may contain transmissible infectious agents.

Standard precautions include:

- Hand washing
- Use of gloves
- Use of protective eye-wear and mask

Hand Hygiene

How Well Are You Washing Your Hands?

- Avoid unnecessary touching of surfaces in close proximity to the client to prevent contamination of clean hands from environmental surfaces and transmission of germs from contaminated hands to surfaces.
- When hands are visibly dirty, or visibly soiled, wash hands with both soap and water.
- Alcohol-based hand sanitizers don't cut through dirt. They are handy to have when plain old soap and water just aren't at hand.
- Perform hand hygiene:
 - Before seeing the client
 - Before eating
 - After seeing the client
 - After removing and disposing of personal protective equipment
 - Before preparing and serving food

- After using bathroom or helping someone else in bathroom
 - After touching pets
 - After coughing or sneezing or wiping runny noses
 - After eating, drinking or using tobacco
 - After anything that gets your hands dirty
-
- Cover cuts with bandages and wear gloves for added protection.
 - Keep hands away from your eyes, nose or mouth.
 - Assume that contact with any body fluids is infectious.

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

Are you using it correctly?



GLOVES

- **Wear gloves:**

- When directly handling potentially infectious materials or in contact with contaminated surfaces
- Vinyl, latex or Nitrile gloves may be worn for providing direct client care
- Reusable utility gloves for cleaning the environment or equipment
- Change gloves when visibly soiled, torn or punctured
- Remove gloves after contact with a client and/or the surrounding environment (Including equipment) using proper technique to prevent hand contamination

- **Wash hands upon removing gloves:** Gloves do not replace the need for excellent hand washing!
 - Do not wear the same pair of gloves for the care of more than one client
 - Do not wash gloves for the purpose of reuse since this practice has been associated with transmission of germs
 - Change gloves during client care if the hands will move from a contaminated body-site (E.g., mouth care) to a clean body-site (E.g., wash face)

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)

MOUTH, NOSE, EYE

All staff in applicable programs should have been fitted for masks. If you have not received fit testing, and you work in Men's Services, Women's Services or Community Services, please speak to your Director or Human Resources Manager.

Note: You should only be wearing the appropriate size of N95 mask as per your fitting (Your size will be posted at your workplace).

Droplets can be generated from a person during coughing, sneezing, talking. Droplets may contain microorganisms and generally travel no more than 3 feet from the client and can be deposited on the client's nose, eyes or mouth. Diseases requiring droplet precautions include the H1N1 flu.



- Use PPE to protect the eyes, nose and mouth.
- Select masks, goggles, face shields, and combinations of each according to the need anticipated by the task performed.

- Surgical masks help protect your nose and mouth from splattered body fluids (Such as blood, respiratory secretions, vomit) when working within 3 feet of the client.
- Respirators filter the air you breathe to help protect you from microorganisms including bacteria and many viruses. The N95 disposable respirator is the most common.
- Which respirator should I use? N95 respirators give you the protection of both an N95 respirator and a surgical or procedure mask. Most N95 respirators available at your local hardware store or pharmacy have been certified by NIOSH to filter the air you breathe.

Three-foot Rule: *The three-foot rule is used by infection control practitioners as the “safe” distance to prevent respiratory infection transmission. Respiratory droplets that are large or numerous enough to contain enough viruses to cause infection are not believed to be propelled more than three feet (One metre) from the person coughing/sneezing.*

Why Should I cover my Cough?

Serious respiratory illnesses like influenza are spread by coughing or sneezing and unclean hands. The flu spreads easily in crowded places where people are in close contact.

Avoid crowded places.

How do I stop the spread of germs if I am sick?

- Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue every time you cough or sneeze. Throw the used tissue in a waste basket.
- If you don't have a tissue, sneeze or cough into your sleeve.
- After coughing or sneezing, always clean your hands with soap or an alcohol-based hand cleaner.
- Do not share eating utensils, drinking glasses, towels or other personal items.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth.
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick, if possible.
- Get vaccinated! Influenza (Flu) vaccine can prevent wearing masks. They are preventing the spread of germs.



Help protect your co-workers – DO NOT come to work if you have a fever, cough, sore throat or body aches!

Cleaning of the Environment

Employees involved in housekeeping activities should utilize hand washing procedures and protective barrier precautions when performing cleaning tasks. The type of barrier protection required is dependent on both the procedure performed and environmental conditions. The exercise of good and reasonable judgment on the part of the employee is needed.

Hand washing should be performed: just prior to the start of cleaning procedures; followed contamination of the hands by blood or body substances; after removing a pair of gloves and before donning a new pair of gloves; after completing cleaning activities.

Gloves



Non-sterile gloves should be worn for all cleaning procedures. General purpose utility gloves, such as household rubber gloves used for housekeeping, may be washed, disinfected, and reused. Disposable gloves should be changed whenever they are torn, punctured, cut, or show any other evidence of deterioration between cleaning each patient room/or; following contact with grossly or visibly

contaminated items or surfaces. Disposable gloves should not be washed, disinfected, or reused. ***Gloved hands may not be washed as an alternative to changing gloves.***

Using standard precautions follow your programs established procedures for routine and targeted cleaning of environmental surfaces. Clean and disinfect surfaces that are likely to be contaminated with germs, including those that are in close proximity to the client (E.g., beds, desks, tables, chairs) and frequently-touched surfaces (E.g., door knobs, surfaces in and surrounding toilets) on a more frequent schedule compared to that for other surfaces (E.g., horizontal surfaces in waiting rooms).





Quarantine

Introduction

You are off sick with the H1N1 Influenza. Here are some questions you may have.

How long do I need to stay in quarantine?

You need to stay at home for three days from the start of antiviral treatment. It is recommended that you do not have visitors during that time. If you are not taking antiviral treatment, you are asked to stay at home for at least seven days.

Taking care of sick people in quarantine:

If you are ill, it will be at least three days after the start of antiviral treatment before quarantine can be expected to end.

Helpful Tips:

- Keep other household members away from the sick person as much as possible. Avoid close contact (Less than one metre away).
- Keep the sick person in a room separate from the common areas of the home. If possible, they should not share a bedroom or bathroom. Keep the sick room door closed.
- Have only one adult take care of the sick person if possible, to limit the number of people exposed in the household. Preferably, this should not be a pregnant woman, as they are at higher risk of complications from influenza.
- The sick person should not have any visitors other than caregivers. A phone call is safer than a visit.
- Use treatments such as nebulizers or inhalers in a separate room away from common areas and other people.
- Watch for signs that the sick person may need further medical attention, including: difficulty breathing, chest pain, blueness around the lips, inability to keep fluids down, and becoming less alert or developing confusion.
- Keep the personal items of the sick person, such as towels, separate from the rest of the family.

- Remember not to share eating utensils, food or drinks.

Use Facemasks to limit the spread of the virus:

Remember to:

- Have the sick person wear a surgical mask if they need to be in a common area of the house near other people.
- Wear a mask labeled P2 or N95 if you help a sick person with treatments such as a nebulizer or inhaler.
- Take off used facemasks and respirators and place them in the garbage immediately so they do not touch anything else.
- Wash your hands with soap and water before and after you take off a facemask.
- Re-useable fabric facemasks can be washed with normal laundry detergent and tumble-dried in a hot dryer.
- Facemasks and respirators can be purchased at a pharmacy or hardware store.

Pharmacies may not stock P2 or N95 masks. Please try your local hardware store.

Looking After Yourself:

- Get plenty of rest
- Drink clear fluids to avoid dehydration
- Maintain a normal diet if possible



Protect other people in the household:

There are a number of measures you can take to protect yourself and others from influenza. There is no vaccine available right now to protect against Human Swine Flu.

Take these steps to protect your health:

Hygiene:

Personal hygiene is very important to limit the spread of infection.

Remember to:

- Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze. Throw the tissue in a plastic-lined rubbish bin after you use it.
- Wash your hands frequently with soap and warm water, scrubbing your wrists, palms, fingers and nails for 10-15 seconds. Rinse and dry with a clean, dry towel.
- Try not to rub your eyes or touch your nose or mouth after touching surfaces, as this is how you may catch the virus. Alcohol-based hand cleaners are also effective.
- Remember to keep the sick person's items like clothes, bedding and towels separate from those belonging to people who are well in the household.
- Try to stay one metre or more from the sick person to reduce the spread of illness. If possible, the sick person should sleep in a separate room.

Help you might need:

You should:

- Identify someone who could help you with food and supplies if you and your family are ill. They will need to drop supplies at your front door prior to you opening the door.

- Keep the phone number of your family doctor and health information line in a prominent place.
- Contact local shops by phone or internet, many will home deliver but ask them to leave groceries at the door and arrange payment by phone.

Supplies you might need in quarantine:

It is a good idea to have these supplies in the home:

- Fluids (Such as bottled water, juices, soups) and food to last you and your family a week.
- Basic household items (For example, tissues) to last a week.
- Plastic bags (Used supermarket bags are good) to put used tissues in.
- Medication to treat fever and a thermometer in your medicine cabinet.



Pandemic Alert Level

Our Level is currently set at LOW

PLEASE RESPOND ACCORDINGLY.

This means that:

- Staff will report to work as usual
- Screening all admits for flu like symptoms
- Staff will follow all hand washing procedures
- Staff will monitor pandemic levels
- Staff with symptoms (fever, cough, body ache) is asked to go/stay home

Pandemic Alert Level

Our Level is currently set at MEDIUM

PLEASE RESPOND ACCORDINGLY.

This means that:

- We have infected clients and/or infected staff
- Masks will be given to clients presenting symptoms and clients may be placed in isolation
- Screening measures are heightened (Do not meet with clients closer than 4 feet)
- The specified Personal Protection Equipment is required when in the presence of sick/potentially infected clients

Pandemic Alert Level

Our Level is currently set at HIGH

PLEASE RESPOND ACCORDINGLY.

This means that:

- At least 50% of MSHI staff is off sick
- Only Essential Services are operating
- Re-assignment may be required for some staff
(Based on skills/experience and at the discretion of the Directors)
- Specific staff may be required to work from home

Pandemic Alert Level

Our Level is currently set at...

Emergency SHUT DOWN

PLEASE RESPOND ACCORDINGLY.

This means that:

- The Executive Director/ Senior Leadership in accordance with The Board of Directors have declared an emergency shutdown
- All services (Including essential services) are now shut down
- Support services in the community are reduced
- All staff is laid off
- Records of Employment will be sent to all staff

SAFETY

FIRST

