

June 11, 2009

Dear Stakeholder:

As you may know, the World Health Organization today declared a Level 6 H1N1 (human swine influenza) pandemic, based on the transmission patterns of this new influenza virus around the world. This simply means the virus has spread to more locations; it does not mean the virus is more severe.

This was not a surprise. We were aware that this might happen, and we are prepared for it.

In Nova Scotia, we have had 79 cases of H1N1 (human swine influenza) to date. In most situations, the cases we've seen here in Nova Scotia have been typical flu-like illness, which patients can treat at home. We have had one case, in Capital District Health Authority, which required hospitalization. That patient had a pre-existing medical condition, and is now improving.

We continue, however, to take the virus seriously. We are preparing for the possibility that Nova Scotia might see more cases of H1N1 (human swine influenza), and with greater severity, with more people requiring hospitalization.

In Manitoba and in Nunavut, where numbers of cases continue to increase, a significant number of people from remote communities who've been infected with the virus have required hospitalization for severe illness. It is not clear why that's the case. Regardless, together we need to prepare Nova Scotia's healthcare system for the possibility that we may see more cases of this virus, and more severe cases. We must also be prepared for the strain that could place on the system.

I would encourage you and your organization(s) to also prepare for the potential that this virus could return with increased frequency and severity. You can do this by ensuring your own business continuity plans are in place and by keeping up-to-date on the most current information.

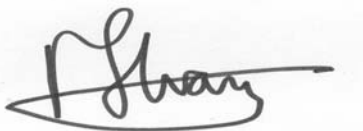
Please remember that prevention is always the best way to prevent flu-like illness. Please take note of, and share, the following key tips to staying well:

- Cough or sneeze into your sleeve or arm;
- Frequently clean and disinfect common surfaces and items such doorknobs and counters;
- Stay away from public places if you are sick.

Visit [www.gov.ns.ca/hpp/cdpc/h1n1-influenza-posters.asp](http://www.gov.ns.ca/hpp/cdpc/h1n1-influenza-posters.asp) for general handwashing hygiene posters you can post in your office or facility.

Thank you for your support and your cooperation.

Sincerely,



Robert Strang MD, MHSc., FRCPC  
Chief Public Health Officer  
Department of Health Promotion and Protection