To: Mayor and Members
   Board of Health

From: Elizabeth Richardson, MD, MHSc, FRCP
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Re: Pandemic Influenza Plan – Update (BOH07009) (City Wide)

Council Direction:
N/A

Information:
The purpose of this report is to update the Mayor and Board of Health on the Pandemic Planning process within the City Of Hamilton.

Background:
The World Health Organization (WHO) assigns one of 6 phases to reflect the international risk or activity level of new influenza virus subtypes. We are currently in Phase 3 - a new subtype of influenza has been identified but no human-to-human spread has occurred.

A coordinated response to pandemic influenza requires collective infrastructures, response capacities and coordinated activities that will permit the Federal/Provincial/Territorial Ministers of Health and their representatives to anticipate problems, monitor for adverse outcomes and respond to minimize the impact of pandemic influenza within their jurisdictions. During the planning and response phase of the Pandemic, City Of Hamilton Public Health Services (PHS) will follow guidelines from the Ontario Ministry of Health and Long Term Care (MOHLTC) and the Public Health Agency of Canada.

The pandemic influenza planning process in the City Of Hamilton has been in place since 2001. This process involves the collaboration of many community partners and can be used for any large scale emergency event involving multiple sectors within the community.
To create an effective plan, Public Health Services has engaged the following stakeholders in the Pandemic Planning process;

**Health:** Hamilton Health Sciences, St. Joseph’s Hospital, Public Health Laboratory, Community Care Access Centre, Long Term Care Facilities; community Family Physicians, Health Services at McMaster University and Mohawk College, Mental Health and Addiction Services ,

**Education:** Hamilton Wentworth Public School Board, Hamilton-Wentworth Separate School Board, private schools, daycares, McMaster University and Mohawk College

**Faith Communities:** Churches and the Anglican Dioceses Office in the Hamilton / Niagara area. Funeral homes have also been involved in the planning process.

**Community and business sectors:** Chamber of Commerce, Stelco, Dofasco, Vopak, City of Hamilton Departments, Red Cross, Good Shepherd Centre, CHAM Radio Station

**Volunteer:** Community Emergency Response Volunteers

A number of committees have been initiated to insure an effective, coordinated pandemic response within the City Of Hamilton. These committees have specific functions, a diagram and the relationship of these committees to City Council, the Ministry Of Health and Long Term Care and the Public Health Agency of Canada is shown as Appendix A to BOH07009.

**The Pandemic Influenza Steering Committee.**

The Pandemic Influenza Steering Committee will make recommendations based on directives and evidence that will support a collaborative and effective response to a pandemic or a potential pandemic in the City Of Hamilton. The Pandemic Influenza Steering Committee will also provide direction and guidance to the acute and community health care sector in the City Of Hamilton.

The Committee is chaired by the Medical Officer of Health, and includes members from:

- Chief Executive Officer from Hamilton Health Sciences and St Joseph’s Healthcare
- Infectious Disease Physicians from Hamilton Health Sciences and St. Joseph’s Healthcare
- Occupational Health Physician from St. Joseph’s Hospital
- Chief of Family Medicine from Hamilton Health Sciences and St. Joseph’s Healthcare
- Director of Public Health Lab
- Criticall
- Director of Emergency Medical Services
- Emergency Physician from Hamilton Health Sciences.
- Chief Executive Officer from Local Health Integration Network (4) (Corresponding member)
During pandemic influenza, difficult decisions may need to be made about access to care, mobilization and re-allocation of resources, deployment of staff and other measures to contain the spread of influenza. To address these ethical issues the Steering Committee is utilizing an Ethical Framework designed by the University of Toronto Joint Centre for Bioethics. This framework offers guidance and is a means of improving accountability for decision making. An ethicist from McMaster University has attended the Steering Committee meeting to ensure core ethical values are addressed in decision-making.

The Community Communication Committee:
The purpose of the Community Communication Committee is to plan and implement a collaborative communication strategy on Pandemic Influenza for Hamilton. The strategy will address simple messages such as influenza symptoms, preventing the flu and care for those who have the flu. The Corporate Communications Officer will ensure that materials are available in the 10 most widely spoken languages in the City.

Members include the following:

- Communications Officer, City Of Hamilton
- Public Health Services Emergency Planner
- Communication personnel from Hamilton Health Sciences
- Communication personnel from St. Joseph's Health Care
- Communication personnel from St. Peters Health System
- Communication personnel from Separate School Board
- Communication personnel from Public School Board
- Communication personnel from McMaster University
- Communication personnel from Mohawk College
- Representative from Community Care Access Centre
- Representative from Red Cross
- Representative from Salvation Army
- Representative from Day Care Centres
- Representative from Good Shepherd Centre
- Representative from Private Educational Facilities
- Representative from the Chamber of Commerce

The Continuity of Operations Committee (COOP)
The purpose of this committee is to plan for the continuity of operations within each City Department during a pandemic. The planning activities include identifying critical services that must be maintained and services that may be altered or stopped during a pandemic. Essential to the continuity of operations planning process is identification of human resources and supplies needed during a pandemic. Hamilton Emergency Services leads this committee and will complete a Corporate Pandemic Plan outlining
the process of delivering city services during a pandemic. Members include representatives from Hamilton Hydro and the following departments:

- City Managers Office
- Community Services
- Corporate Services
- Emergency Services
- Hamilton Police
- Hamilton Public Library
- HECFI
- HES – Emergency Medical Services
- HES - Fire
- Horizon Utilities
- Human Resources
- IT Services
- Public Health Services
- Planning & Economic Development
- Public Works

**Educational Facilities and Daycares**

Working committees have been initiated within McMaster University, Mohawk College, Hamilton Wentworth Board of Education, Hamilton Wentworth Separate Board of Education and representatives from daycares. These committees are considering the impact of a pandemic on their facility and how best to deliver services during a pandemic. McMaster University completed a Pandemic exercise in March of 2006 and Mohawk College completed a Pandemic Exercise in January of 2007.

**Health Services & Assessment Centres**

The delivery of health care services within Hamilton may be greatly challenged throughout a Pandemic Influenza. Health care capacity issues are already significant and will be further stressed with health care provider absenteeism due to illness and potentially increased volumes of patients seeking health care. The establishment of assessment centres may reduce visits to emergency rooms and physician offices. Many of the health service issues require provincial planning direction e.g. hospital admission and discharge criteria, licensure issues for health care workers and triage guidelines. Consistency in the delivery of health care services across Hamilton and the province of Ontario is essential. The Pandemic Influenza Steering Committee has developed a small working group with the hospitals, community physicians and Community Care Access Centre to address these issues. Potential sites have been identified and will be considered as the planning process continues in the City Of Hamilton.

**Mass Fatality Planning**

Pandemic influenza may result in an increase number of deaths. In the event that local funeral directors are unable to handle this increased volume, it will be the responsibility
of municipalities to make appropriate arrangements. City staff will be expected to manage this increase in deaths during a time when many staff may be ill. Public Health Services has met with the following agencies to develop a plan for mass fatalities during a pandemic:

- the Coroner Office
- Emergency Medical Services
- Police Department
- Representative from Funeral Services Association

A plan to clarify roles during a pandemic in the City Of Hamilton is expected by April 2007.

Summary

As PHS continues to lead the pandemic planning process, the framework for pandemic planning outlined here has brought together many community partners to strengthen coordination at the municipal level and increase our joint capacity to respond to an influenza pandemic. Through this planning process and working together, the City, PHS and its partners will be well equipped to reduce illness, death and social disruption in the City Of Hamilton in the event of pandemic influenza or a similar large-scale human health emergency.

Elizabeth Richardson, MD, MHSc, FRCPC
Medical Officer of Health
Public Health Services
Appendix A to Report BOH07009

Decision Tree for Pandemic Planning & Pandemic Response

Public Health Agency of Canada

Ministry of Health and Long Term Care to Local Medical Officer of Health

Pandemic Influenza Steering Committee

Role
Primary decision making committee for health issues during a pandemic

City Emergency Control Group

Mayor communicates to Council

Ad Hoc Members
School Boards, University, College
Chamber of Commerce
CAER (Industry)
Daycares

Community Communication Committee

Role
Communicate preparedness and public health messages

Mass Fatality Planning

Role
Prepare for mass fatalities

Continuity of Operations Committee

Role
Develop plans to ensure continuity of operations in all City Departments