Council Direction:
N/A

Information:
During the 1999-2000 flu season there was above average influenza activity in Ontario creating a heavy burden on the health care system. In response, and given the evidence of the impact of vaccines, the province announced that it would offer free influenza immunization to all Ontario residents beginning in the 2000/01 season.

Because of the large number of people to be immunized annually, many vehicles for vaccine administration are utilized, such as family physicians, public health departments, pharmacies, workplaces and long term and acute care facilities.

Public Health Services offers influenza immunization at community clinics to help protect the public from influenza. These clinics are open to citizens who live, work or attend school in our jurisdiction. Over the past six seasons, we have annually immunized approximately 23,000 people, as depicted in the following chart.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Hamilton Influenza Clinic Summary 2000-2005</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Clinics</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>-------------</td>
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<tr>
<td>Residents immunized</td>
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<tr>
<td>Budget</td>
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<tr>
<td>Net Levy</td>
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<td>Total Doses Distributed**</td>
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* Includes pandemic planning response.
** Vaccine doses distributed to hospitals, LTCF, physicians, agencies, our clinics and workplaces
The MOHLTC provides $5.00 per dose of vaccine administered at public health community clinics. This amount is to cover the cost of vaccine administration. As noted in the table above, beginning in 2003, the clinics were run with no net levy impact to the City. Costs associated with management, professional and support staff are currently funded under the cost-shared Vaccine Preventable Disease Programs.

Due to manufacturing issues, delivery of the influenza vaccine to provinces and territories across Canada, including Ontario, will be delayed this year. The reason for the delay is two-fold:

1) one of the virus strains included in the vaccine this year is taking longer to culture than anticipated, and
2) a new manufacturing line for one of the pharmaceutical companies means additional steps in licensing the vaccine prior to release. Public health units in Ontario have been assured that this is not a vaccine shortage, only a delay.

The MOHLTC has set guidelines for the distribution of vaccine given this delay. The primary goal is to provide influenza vaccination first to those people at high risk of influenza-related complications. This group of individuals are defined by the National Advisory Committee on Immunization (NACI) as the following:

1. People of any age who are residents of nursing homes and other chronic care facilities,
2. Adults and children with selected chronic health conditions who require regular medical follow-up or hospital care (e.g. cardiac or pulmonary disorders, diabetes mellitus, cancer or other immunosuppression due to disease and/or therapy, renal disease, etc.)
3. People ≥ 65 years of age
4. Healthy children aged 6 to 23 months.

Given these guidelines, Public Health Services has changed how vaccine will be distributed within our community, including the scheduling of public health-organized community clinics across the jurisdiction. Hamilton Public Health Services will make vaccine available in the following order: Long-term care facilities for staff and residents, hospitals, family physicians for their high risk patients, community clinics, workplaces, and pharmacies.

In addition to managing the distribution changes, Public Health Services has had to alter previously planned clinic dates. At the direction of the MOHLTC, this year’s clinics are not to begin until mid-November. In previous years, community clinics would begin in late October or early November. Public Health has been working closely with our community partners to finalize the schedule based on the anticipated date of vaccine delivery. A copy of the finalized clinic schedule will be forwarded to the Board of Health members, under separate cover, when available.

Finally, based on community feedback from last year’s clinic evaluations, new clinic sites have been negotiated, including Eastgate Mall. Two clinics will also be held in Waterdown this year, due to increased community interest. Vaccine uptake at these clinic sites will determine if they are viable sites for future years.
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Medical Officer of Health
Public Health Services