

IMPORTANT NOTICE

MINISTRY OF HEALTH AND LONG-TERM CARE

Ontario Releases its Plan for the Pandemic Influenza

Are you Prepared for an Influenza Pandemic?

Public health officials have warned that a global influenza pandemic is overdue. They estimate that an influenza pandemic in Ontario, depending on the number of people infected, could result in between 22,000 and 52,000 additional hospitalizations, an increase of between 980,000 and 2.25 million outpatient visits, and 5,000 to 12,000 more deaths.

On May 31, 2004 the Ontario Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care released the **Ontario Health Pandemic Influenza Plan (OHPIP)**. A key component of the provincial plan is the requirement to develop a plan at the local level for the mass fatalities that will result from an influenza pandemic.

The Ontario Plan, **OHPIP**, can be accessed on the ministry website at:

http://www.health.gov.on.ca/english/public/pub/ministry_reports/pandemic/pandemic_plan04_mn.html

The **national plan**, from which the OHPIP evolved, is also available and can be viewed at:

<http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca/pphb-dgspsp/cpip-pclcpi/>

During a pandemic, funeral licensees will have to be prepared to manage additional deaths due to influenza, over and above the number of fatalities from all causes currently expected during the inter-pandemic period. Within any locality, the total number of fatalities (including influenza and all other causes) occurring during a six to eight week pandemic wave is estimated to be similar to that which typically occurs over six months in the inter-pandemic period (the period between epidemics in which influenza viruses related to the preceding epidemic are circulating). If you have not already begun to plan for mass fatalities during an influenza pandemic, you should begin these activities as soon as possible.

The Canadian Pandemic Influenza Plan provides an annex that contains guidelines to assist local authorities in planning for the management of mass fatalities during an influenza pandemic. The annex is an excellent resource to help guide local planners on issues such as corpse management, temporary morgues, transportation, social/religious considerations, etc..

Local public health units will be the lead for responding to an influenza pandemic at the local level. Funeral licensees are encouraged to contact their local public health unit for further direction on pandemic influenza planning, including planning for mass fatalities. For information on how to contact the local public health unit in your area, visit the Public Health webpage on the Ministry of Health web site at:

http://www.health.gov.on.ca/english/public/contact/phu/phuloc_mn.html

Should you have questions related to the Canadian Pandemic Influenza Plan or OHPIP, please contact the Emergency Management Unit at the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care through the toll-free hotline at: 1 (866) 212-2272.