

Swine Flu - Notice #1, April 29, 2009

There has been an outbreak of a new influenza virus. The virus is a flu virus that normally affects pigs. It has begun to infect humans and has spread from human to human in the absence of pigs. The outbreak began in Mexico and has spread to a number of countries. This has caused the World Health Organization to raise their alert level. This does not mean that we are experiencing a pandemic. It does mean that world governments and public health agencies are increasing their monitoring and surveillance activities. This includes the Canadian federal, provincial and municipal governments and public health departments. Screening and surveillance at airports and borders has been increased. Ontario had the experience of SARS in 2003 and as a result we learned a great deal about managing outbreaks of illness. Ontario has one of the most comprehensive plans in the world.

Where can information be found?

Information on the developing situation can be found by listening to the news and reading the paper. Information can also be found at the following web sites

- <http://www.fightflu.ca/index-eng.html>
- http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/alert-alerte/swine_200904-eng.php
- <http://www.region.waterloo.on.ca> (Go to public health section)

ILCWR will be establishing a link on our website to keep staff and consumers updated.

What are the symptoms of swine flu?

They are essentially the same as regular seasonal influenza; fever, fatigue, lack of appetite, coughing and sore throat. Some people may experience vomiting and diarrhea.

How does this affect ILCWR Attendant Staff at this time?

At the time of writing this memo there have been only 13 confirmed cases of swine flu in Canada, 4 in Ontario, none in Waterloo Region. This information is changing rapidly. There continue to be cases of regular seasonal influenza. Please consider the following instructions:

- Staff are asked to continue providing service as usual.
- ***Wash your hands or use hand sanitizer frequently.***
- If your consumer is sick with fever and cough and there is a risk they may cough on you while you are providing care, use a mask. Inform your supervisor immediately that the consumer is ill. This is the normal protocol.
- If you become sick with symptoms of the flu as listed above DO NOT come to work. Use the regular call in sick procedure to notify your consumer or project. If you think you need to see a doctor, call your doctor first before going.

Please pay close attention to website and payroll notices. Further information will be provided to staff as it becomes available. If you have questions or concerns please do not hesitate to contact your supervisor or Christina Churchill at christina@ilcwr.org or 519-571-6788, ext 7480.