

January 5, 2016

Attention: Physicians, Nurse Practitioners, Hospitals - Emergency Rooms / Infection Control / Occupational Health, Walk-In Clinics, Long-Term Care Homes, Retirement Homes, EMS, Corrections

## **RE: FIRST CASE OF INFLUENZA IN HKPR AREA**

The Haliburton, Kawartha, Pine Ridge District Health Unit has received notification of our first laboratory confirmed case of influenza for the 2015/2016 season. The two laboratory confirmed flu cases reported in October 2015 were among individuals reporting travel outside of Canada.

Influenza can affect persons of all ages and is associated with increased otitis media (young children), pneumonia and hospitalizations. Influenza vaccination is recommended for everyone 6 months of age and older.

A reminder that those children 6 months to < 9 years of age who have never had a flu shot should receive two doses of vaccine, at least 4 weeks apart. For best results, use the same vaccine, if available.

Recommendations:

### **Health Care Providers**

- Continue to offer influenza vaccine to patients and staff

### **Hospitals**

- Ensure all patients in complex continuing care units have been offered influenza vaccination
- Increase efforts to ensure maximum influenza vaccination coverage among all staff
- Remain alert for symptoms of respiratory illness, implement appropriate precautions, and collect diagnostic specimens for influenza when appropriate. Note the patient setting (i.e. inpatient ICU, inpatient ward) on requisitions for specimens sent to the Public Health Lab

### **Long-Term Care and Retirement Homes**

- Ensure all residents have been offered influenza vaccination
- Increase efforts to ensure that all staff have been vaccinated against influenza
- Ensure process is in place to obtain antivirals if needed
- Review outbreak recognition and management guidelines; ensure outbreak kits and nasopharyngeal swab kits are readily available
- Contact the Health Unit immediately if you suspect an outbreak

### **Emergency Service Workers**

- Increase efforts to ensure that all staff have been vaccinated against influenza
- Use appropriate PPE when transporting individuals with respiratory symptoms

If you have any questions about this notice, please contact the Health Unit and ask to speak with a nurse in the Communicable Disease Control Department.