

Ontario Responded Well To H1N1 Pandemic Says Chief Medical Officer Of Health

New report says that changes needed to improve future responses to public health emergencies

NEWS

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Ontario responded well to the H1N1 pandemic but greater coordination and standardization is needed for future health emergencies, according to a new report from Dr. Arlene King, Ontario's Chief Medical Officer of Health.

Dr King's report found the following elements of the pandemic response worked well:

- Rates of death and hospitalization in Ontario were low relative to overall Canadian rates
- Every person who wanted a vaccine received one
- A high level of collaboration existed amongst all levels of government through good discussions and a willingness to engage with one another
- Close collaboration with First Nations led to timely antiviral and vaccine delivery to remote and isolated communities
- Schools remained open throughout the height of the pandemic

However, some elements of the pandemic response did not work so well and require improvement:

- Ontario did not receive good information about how much vaccine the province was going to receive from the federal government
- Ontario required greater preparation for the delivery of a mass immunization campaign
- There was no ability to electronically track vaccine delivery and uptake
- Greater coordination between the provincial response and national response was required on vaccine supply and delivery
- There is need for greater powers to ensure more standardization and coordination during a public health emergency to ensure consistent service delivery for all Ontarians

The report recommends that consideration should be given to structural changes in the health care system to improve management and oversight in response to a pandemic, or other emerging infectious diseases.

QUOTES

“Ontario was ready for the H1N1 pandemic, but we need to make further improvements so that we can respond even better in the future.”

– Dr. Arlene King, Ontario's Chief Medical Officer of Health

QUICK FACTS

- Since April 2009, 128 deaths have been reported among lab confirmed cases of H1N1.
- Between April 1, 2009 and April 19, 2010, there were 8,761 laboratory confirmed cases of H1N1 flu virus reported in Ontario.

- The initial Ontario Health Plan for an Influenza Pandemic was created in 2004 and is continually improved and updated in response to new information.

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Read the report

Read the [Ontario Health Plan for an Influenza Pandemic](#) (2008)

Media Contacts:
Andrew Morrison, Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care, 416-314-6197

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