



May 17, 2012

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The Honourable Deb Matthews, M.P.P.
Minister of Health
Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care
10th Floor, Hepburn Block
80 Grosvenor Street
Toronto, Ontario M7A 2C4

Dear Minister:

RE: MO-16-12 - Universal Influenza Immunization Program, 2011-2012

This will confirm that the Council of the Regional Municipality of Halton, at its meeting held Wednesday, April 18, 2012, adopted the following resolution:

1. THAT Report No. MO-16-12 re: "Universal Influenza Immunization Program, 2011- 2012" be received for information.
2. THAT the Regional Chair send a letter to the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care requesting that hospital staff influenza immunization rates become one of the reportable patient safety indicators, and that the letter be copied to AMO, and to the Clerks of other regional and single tier municipalities in Ontario for their information.

Attached please find a copy of Report No. MO-16-12 for your information.

If you have any questions please contact Dr. Bob Nosal, Commissioner and Medical Officer of Health.

Sincerely,



Gary Carr
Regional Chair

encl.

- c. Pat Moyle, Chief Administrative Officer, Halton Region
Dr. Bob Nosal, Commissioner and Medical Officer of Health, Halton Region
AMO
Clerks of other regional and single tier municipalities in Ontario

The Regional Municipality of Halton

Report To:	Chair and Members of the Health and Social Services Committee
From:	Bob Nosal, Commissioner and Medical Officer of Health
Date:	April 10, 2012
Report No. - Re:	MO-16-12 - Universal Influenza Immunization Program, 2011-2012

RECOMMENDATION

THAT Report No. MO-16-12 re: “Universal Influenza Immunization Program, 2011-2012” be received for information.

REPORT

Purpose

The purpose of this report is to provide Regional Council with the details of the 2011-2012 Universal Influenza Immunization Program (UIIP), including immunization rates and related costs.

Background

In October 2000, Ontario launched the world’s first Universal Influenza Immunization Program (UIIP). The UIIP makes publicly funded vaccine available to all persons six months of age and older who live, study, or work in the province. The program is now in its 12th year. The goals of the UIIP remain unchanged:

- Share important influenza information so that residents:
 - feel informed
 - can take steps to protect themselves from infection
 - know where to get more information
- Immunize as many Halton residents as possible against seasonal influenza virus
- Reduce the impact of influenza on health care services and hospital emergency rooms
- Support efforts to increase immunization of health care providers in Halton
- Minimize the number of influenza cases within Halton

The role of the Halton Region Health Department is to distribute influenza vaccine to family physicians, hospitals, long-term care homes (LTCH), health care services, and agencies conducting workplace programs. The Health Department also completes a qualification process by verifying that these settings have the appropriate vaccine storage and handling processes in place by performing cold chain inspections prior to distribution of vaccine. The Health Department promotes the annual influenza campaign, provides immunization clinics for the general public and monitors distribution and uptake of vaccine in the community. In addition to co-ordinating the program with its partners, the Health Department is responsible for documenting and reporting the influenza immunization coverage rates to the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care (MOHLTC). The following is a list of various groups in the community that were included in the influenza immunization coverage rate as of November 15, 2011:

- Staff at hospitals: including employees, students, medical house staff, physicians, volunteers, and contract workers
- All persons who carry on activities in LTCH including employees, physicians, contract workers, maintenance workers, volunteers and other workers who come in contact with residents
- Residents of LTCH

In the 2010-2011 season, 121,625 doses of vaccines were distributed by the Health Department to physicians, hospitals, agencies, workplaces and LTCH and 13,015 doses were administered at the Health Department community clinics. This season 2011-2012, a total of 127,307 doses of influenza vaccine were distributed and 12,883 doses were administered by staff at clinics run by the Health Department.

KEY INITIATIVES:

The Halton Region Health Department uses a number of different media resources to promote influenza vaccine and community clinics. The Health Department is also responsible for vaccine distribution and support efforts in promoting influenza immunization in Halton Region's health care facilities.

1. Communications

The rate of seasonal influenza immunization has decreased across Ontario over the last few years. This year a new campaign theme, "The Flu ends with U", was created by Strategic Communications to help raise awareness among Halton residents about the importance of receiving the seasonal flu vaccine. The campaign targeted adult Halton residents (age 18 and older) and health care workers in Halton.

To the public

The UIIP campaign incorporated new tactics based on research conducted by the MOHLTC. These new tactics included various social media tools such as:

- A three-part blog series on the HaltonParents Wordpress blog
- Twitter messages promoting clinics sent out through HaltonParents Twitter account
- A targeted Facebook advertising campaign that directed traffic to halton.ca/flu

Additional communications tactics included:

- Updated materials and new digital resources on the Halton seasonal influenza website (halton.ca/flu)
- A fact sheet to help individuals to find the location and schedule of the vaccine clinics
- Media relations campaign including press releases and staff interviews with local publications
- Print advertising in local newspapers
- Coordinated messages for mobile signs that promoted flu clinic information and the halton.ca/flu web page
- Creation and distribution of printed promotional materials including posters and clinic schedules

To health care providers

Health care workers in Halton Region were also a primary audience for this year's communication activities. A 2010-2011 report to Council about the 2009-2010 season indicated that staff immunization rates in long-term care homes and retirement residences had decreased significantly compared to the 2008-2009 season. In response, specific tactics and key messages were developed to encourage this group to take responsibility for receiving the flu immunization.

Informational activities that specifically focused on hospitals and LTCH in the Region included:

- Meeting with hospital occupational health managers, infection control staff, as well as public relations officers from the hospitals to discuss strategies and activities to promote influenza immunization to their employees
- Provide "Flu ends with U" buttons to community LTCH, retirement homes, and hospitals to be given out to immunized staff
- Creating and providing posters with the tag line "Flu ends with U" to community LTCH and retirement homes and hospitals
- Meeting with health care agencies to review their influenza immunization policies for their staff working within hospitals and LTCH
- Providing influenza materials for posting and distribution to healthcare staff
- Reviewing the influenza immunization program with all LTCH

2. Vaccine Distribution

As of March 1, 2012, 127,307 doses of seasonal influenza vaccine had been distributed through the Health Department's Vaccine Depot Service. This represents 5,682 more doses than last season. Also, to ensure quality control, MOHLTC manages a prequalification process for organizations that administer vaccine. Settings such as health care agencies, retirement homes, LTCH, and workplaces that do not normally administer vaccines year-round must demonstrate that they can meet the vaccine storage and handling requirements to participate in the UIIP. The Halton Region Health Department prior to distributing influenza vaccine completed 49 cold chain inspections by verifying that these settings have the appropriate vaccine storage and handling processes in place. The distribution reported in Table I identifies the amount of vaccine received by various health care groups.

Table I: Influenza Vaccine Distribution – Number of Doses distributed to Healthcare Provider Group					
Healthcare Provider Group	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10 **	2010/11	2011/12
Physicians' Offices	83,243	82,070	57,272	86,040	91,364
Hospitals*	4,660	4,650	1,653	3,900	3,260
Long Term Care Facilities*	8,210	7,910	6,444	7,110	8,100
Nursing Agencies* & Private Companies*	19,870	15,030	4,900	11,560	11,700
Health Dept. Clinics	20,268	17,560	13,094	13,015	12,883
Total	136,251	127,220	83,363	121,625	127,307

*Includes doses administered to the general public through agency-sponsored public clinics. This does not include any adjustments for wastage.

** Does not include doses of pandemic H1N1 vaccine

Halton is responsible to ensure that vaccine is distributed to many different providers such as physicians' offices, medical clinics, workplaces, public health clinics, and pharmacies. Halton residents have a number of options to receive their influenza immunization, which increases accessibility.

3. Health Department Community Clinics

This year 30 community clinics were held between October 18, 2011, and January 19, 2012. While most clinics were offered at high schools, some were also held at Seniors' Centres and Halton workplaces (386 staff immunized) for a total of 12,883 doses.

Overall attendance at all clinics was similar to the 2010/2011 season as reflected in Table I.

4. Influenza Immunization Coverage Rates in Halton Region Healthcare Facilities

Table II reflects the influenza immunization coverage rates for staff of the hospitals as of November 15, 2011, as required by the MOHLTC. Note that the reported rates may understate the true coverage as some staff may have been immunized after the reporting date.

Table II: Influenza Immunization Staff Coverage Rate (%) – Hospitals					
Name of Institution	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12
Halton Healthcare Services (three sites)	56%	44%	17% seasonal 52% pH1N1	34%	43%
Joseph Brant Memorial Hospital (JBMH)	51%	32%	31% seasonal 76% pH1N1	28%	25%*

*The per cent of staff that were immunized decreased from last season, however the number of people immunized increased (last year 416, this year 596). This discrepancy can be attributed to the fact that this year JBMH in their report included all staff who carry on activities (e.g., volunteers, maintenance workers, etc.) rather than just medical personnel.

Overall, there was improved staff influenza immunization coverage at Halton Region hospitals this year. Halton Healthcare Services also offered clinics for the public to receive their immunization. However, despite education and the recommendations of the National Advisory Committee on Immunization, significant numbers of staff in acute care settings continue to not be immunized against influenza. None of the Region's hospitals achieved the targeted provincial staff worker influenza immunization rate of 70 per cent.

Table III and Table IV reflect influenza immunization coverage rates for both staff and residents of LTCH as of November 15, 2011. Note that the reported rates may understate the true coverage as some staff may have been immunized after the reporting date.

Table III: Staff Immunization Rate Long-Term Care Homes (%)						
Name of Home	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10 Seasonal	2010/11	2011/12
Allendale Village	88	76	91	98	89	64
Bennett Health Care Centre	51	93	79	16	62	75
Billings Court Manor	61	74	61	1	40	70
The Brant Centre	80	74	66	67	57	86
Burloak LTC	87	83	55	30	62	52
Cama Woodlands	43	34	88	29	58	71
Creekway Village	77	83	92	62	71	72
Extendicare Halton Hills	73	73	53	23	38	46
Hampton Terrace Care Centre	80	78	71	9	15	55
Maple Villa LTC	91	86	89	74	72	69
Mount Nemo Christian Nursing Home	96	81	72	40	36	64
Northridge LTC	58	72	64	18	48	50
Post Inn Village	83	70	71	56	52	53
Village of Tansley Woods	94	43	70	57	42	54
The Waterford	67	93	78	61	64	72
Wellington Park Care	57	48	77	44	87	45
West Oak Village	46	56	57	11	16	21
Wyndham Manor	98	95	97	24	67	62

The staff influenza immunization rate improved this year with an average coverage rate of 60 percent, up from the previous year of 56 per cent. As shown in Table III none of Halton Region's long-term care homes met the Ministry target of 90 per cent immunization coverage for staff however, seven out of the 18 homes had two-thirds of their staff immunized (67 per cent) or more. The three Regional LTCH continued to promote influenza immunization to staff beyond November 2011, as of December 2011, Allendale Village, Creekway Village and Post Inn Village had attained a staff immunization rate of 75, 86, 69 percent respectively.

Table IV: Resident Immunization Rate Long-Term Care Homes (%) *

Name of Home	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10 Seasonal	2010/11	2011/12
Allendale Village	99	92	92	92	93	94
Bennett Health Care Centre	90	92	89	94	88	88
Billings Court Manor	95	98	98	99	100	97
The Brant Centre	93	96	96	91	93	96
Burloak LTC	97	97	99	94	94	94
Cama Woodlands	95	87	97	98	97	97
Creekway Village	92	94	96	97	89	94
Extendicare Halton Hills	97	96	98	95	95	91
Hampton Terrace Care Centre	90	91	94	90	78	92
Maple Villa LTC	94	95	95	96	98	97
Mount Nemo Christian Nursing Home	96	97	97	97	93	93
Northridge LTC	97	99	91	89	89	94
Post Inn Village	94	97	94	86	99	90
Village of Tansley Woods	98	93	99	97	95	97
The Waterford	92	98	95	92	87	97
Wellington Park Care	83	94	92	78	86	76
West Oak Village	95	97	96	90	91	92
Wyndham Manor	97	92	94	91	92	88

Resident immunization rates in six of the 18 LTCH met or surpassed the Ministry target of 95 per cent. All but three of the remaining homes achieved over 90 per cent immunization of residents. Health Department staff will continue to support initiatives that aim to immunize this vulnerable population.

Conclusion

The Halton Region Health Department created communications strategies that promoted awareness about the importance of receiving the seasonal influenza vaccine by using many different methods of communication. The Health Department supported the administration of the UIIP program by ensuring residents can receive their influenza immunization in a variety of settings, including community clinics. In total, 5,682 more doses of vaccine were distributed this season compared to the last season. In addition, to ensure quality control, the Health Department completed 49 cold chain inspections for health care settings that provide influenza immunizations.

Finally, the Health Department collected and reported to the MOHLTC the staff influenza immunization coverage at hospital and LTCH facilities, which showed a slight improvement from the previous year. However, improvements are still necessary. This will continue to be an area of focus for the Health Department.

FINANCIAL/PROGRAM IMPLICATIONS

The MOHLTC continues to pay \$5.00 for every dose of seasonal influenza vaccine administered by the Health Department (excluding workplace clinics). This amount of per dose funding has been in place since the first UIIP campaign began in 2000. The direct cost of providing influenza vaccine services in 2011 was \$7.91. There are additional related costs which push the per dose costs higher. The UIIP costs in excess of the \$5 per dose administered are funded through the Health Department's cost-shared public health programs' budget.

RELATIONSHIP TO HALTON REGION'S 2011-2014 ACTION PLAN

The subject of this staff report is an operational matter not related to Halton Region's 2011-2014 Action Plan.

Respectfully submitted,



Matt Ruf
Director, Health Protection Services



Robert M. Nosal MD FRCPC
Commissioner and Medical Officer of Health

Approved by



Pat Moyle
Chief Administrative Officer

If you have any questions on the content of this report, please contact:

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