



TO: Chair and Members of the Board of Health

FROM: Christopher Mackie, Medical Officer of Health

DATE: 2013 September 19

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## INFLUENZA IMMUNIZATION PROGRAM 2013-2014

### **Recommendation**

*It is recommended that Report No. 104-13 re Influenza Immunization Program 2013-2014 be received for information.*

### **Key Points**

- Influenza vaccine reduces illness, hospitalization and death from the influenza virus.
- The vaccine will be available and accessible free-of-cost to residents in London and Middlesex County beginning in early October.

### **Background**

Influenza (commonly known as “the flu”) is a respiratory infection that is caused by a virus. People with influenza quickly become ill with a cough, fever, sore throat, headache, muscle aches and tiredness. People of any age can get influenza. Most people are sick for two to seven days, although the cough may last for weeks. Influenza can lead to complications such as pneumonia, hospitalization, and even death. The elderly, young children and those with long-term health issues, such as heart and lung problems, diabetes and cancer, are more likely to develop these complications.

Influenza spreads easily from infected people to others through coughing and sneezing. It is also spread through direct contact with surfaces contaminated by the influenza virus, such as toys, unwashed eating utensils and unwashed hands.

Antibodies to influenza develop within about two weeks after the shot. In most years, the vaccine works well to prevent illness from influenza in healthy children and adults. In elderly people, the vaccine helps prevent pneumonia, hospitalization and death from influenza.

### **Influenza Vaccine Availability**

People in Ontario have a range of options to get their influenza vaccine including from their health care provider, through a workplace clinic, from a trained pharmacist or at a Health Unit influenza clinic. Community influenza clinics are scheduled between October 19 and December 10, 2013. The schedule is provided in [Appendix A](#).

In addition to the community clinics, there is a drive-through clinic to offer influenza immunization for those who are not able to attend a community clinic because of mobility or other issues. The drive-through clinic is by appointment and is scheduled for October 26<sup>th</sup>, 2013 in the parking lot at the 50 King Street office. An influenza immunization clinic for the refugee community is being organized in mid-

November in partnership with the London Cross Cultural Learner Centre and the Interfaith Community Health Centre. Discussions are underway to look at providing clinics for vulnerable populations such as individuals and families living in women's shelters and homeless shelters.

Influenza vaccine is also available at the regular Health Unit Immunization Clinics at Health Unit offices although the public is encouraged to attend the community influenza clinics listed in [Appendix A](#) to avoid long wait times at Health Unit office clinics.

Board of Health members, Health Unit staff and volunteers and their families are invited to attend the Immunization Clinic at 50 King Street on October 17th between 3 pm and 7 pm to receive their influenza vaccine.

## **Conclusion**

Individuals who are six months of age and over are strongly encouraged to receive the influenza vaccine to protect themselves and their families from influenza and to avoid losing time from work and school due to influenza illness. The influenza vaccine is particularly important for people at risk of getting seriously ill from influenza and people in close contact with them. Residents of London and Middlesex County have many opportunities to get their influenza vaccine in the next few months.

This report was prepared by Ms. Marlene Price, Manager, Vaccine Preventable Diseases Team.

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Medical Officer of Health and CEO

<p><b>This report addresses</b> the following requirement(s) of the Ontario Public Health Standards: Vaccine Preventable Diseases</p>
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