

Saskatchewan Health Pandemic Influenza Preparedness: Media Backgrounder

In addition to collaborating with the federal government, health regions, First Nations and other partners on an updated pandemic influenza plan, the Government of Saskatchewan is preparing for this influenza season in numerous ways:

- Across government, Ministries, Crowns and other agencies have emergency preparedness plans that help ensure critical public services remain available during situations such as a pandemic.
- Maintaining critical services and utilities, maintaining economic activity and maintaining public services such as courts, corrections, social services, and road maintenance are key considerations in the Province's overall emergency planning.
- All plans take into account interdependencies between various parts of government. For example, keeping government facilities open and providing information technology are vital to keeping the business of government operating.
- Plans specific to a pandemic assume that absenteeism will have some kind of impact on provision of public services. When that impact is felt, appropriate measures will be activated. If circumstances further escalate, those measures will be coordinated across government.
- Where possible, the government workforce will be re-deployed so as to maintain critical services.
- The Minister of Health chairs a special committee of Cabinet overseeing the work of the Ministry of Health and other government ministries in ensuring that government and Crown agencies in the province have their pandemic preparedness plans in place.
- In the days ahead, Ministry of Health officials will continue to make pandemic preparations with senior officials in numerous branches of government and with major Saskatchewan employers.
- Government also continues to share information with First Nations and Metis leadership to ensure that First Nations, Metis and northern communities are prepared for H1N1 influenza spread.

- Medical Health Officers around the province are working with their local communities and health authorities to ensure their plans are in place.
- With the assistance of regional health authorities, the Ministry of Health is distributing posters and other materials to educate the public about infection prevention and self-care. Additional information will also be shared with health system managers for distribution to health-care providers.
- Later this month, every Occupational Health & Safety Committee in Saskatchewan workplaces will receive infection-prevention and self-care information for employees.
- Saskatchewan is working with the federal government and other provinces and territories on advertising materials that will encourage people to get vaccinated against this season's influenza viruses.
- The Ministry of Education is providing information about infection prevention and self-care to schools throughout the province.
- Post-secondary institutions have been provided with a slide-deck of infection-prevention information to be posted online for their faculty, staff and students.