

Pandemic Influenza

Section 8: Public Health Measures



Health and Community Services

8. Public Health Measures

Public health measures are actions taken to prevent, control or mitigate the effects of a pandemic. These decisions will range from population based recommendations to individual measures. The type of public health measures used and their timing will depend on the epidemiology of the outbreak.

Newfoundland and Labrador will use the public health measures outlined in the Canadian Pandemic Influenza Plan which were developed through a collaborative federal, provincial, and territorial planning effort. They are based on the best available advice from WHO and other experts, including mathematical modelling studies¹³.

Public health is a comprehensive preventative approach that may include:

- Public health advice on general personal hygiene and education programs for the public
- Case and contact management during the early stages of pandemic
- Measures to increase social distance, such as closing schools or limiting public gatherings
- Travel restrictions
- Communication plan for the public

Public health measures must consider not only the public at large but should also include public health practices in health services facilities.

8.1 Objectives of Public Health Measures

The objectives of public health measures include:

- Making recommendations regarding public health measures (e.g. cancellation of public gatherings, school closings, quarantine, etc).
- Planning occurs at all levels to raise awareness about the potential impact of these measures so that the necessary partnerships and consultations with external stakeholders start during the interpandemic and continue through all pandemic periods.
- Compliance with public health measures.

8.2 Interpandemic Period

The effectiveness of public health measures for a pandemic is dependent on the overall strength of the public health system. The interpandemic period will be a time to develop the mechanisms and strategies that will allow the public health system to move quickly to pandemic preparedness and response.

During the interpandemic period public health will:

- Work with F/P/T and regional partners to increase annual influenza vaccination uptake
- Review the public education campaign strategy for personal hygiene practices and revise if necessary
- Promote healthy living practices

8.3 Pandemic Alert

During the pandemic alert period the increased likelihood of a pandemic will enhance the need for a more aggressive approach to prepare for the pandemic. The Department of Health and Community Services will work with health partners to clarify their roles and responsibilities in preparing for the pandemic. The Department and the RHAs will promote personal emergency preparedness as a part of their pandemic planning.

8.4 Pandemic Period

During this period of the pandemic, public health measures will concentrate on the response activities of the plan. These may include:

- administration of antiviral drugs and vaccines
- promotion of public health messages on how to avoid infection
- monitoring self health and the health of the family
- self care practices to reduce the need for clinic or hospital care

8.5 Post-Pandemic Period

In the post-pandemic period all the activities are evaluated and analyzed. This will involve debriefing sessions with relevant partners. This may result in review of the current pandemic plan with revisions based on the learnings from the pandemic experience.

Table 8.1 – Public Health Measures Roles and Responsibilities by Pandemic Phase

Public Health Measures Interpandemic Period		
Phase 1 – No new influenza subtypes have been detected in humans. A new influenza virus subtype may be present in animals, but the risk for human infection is low		
Phase 2 – New influenza subtype in animals posing a substantial risk of human disease		
National	Provincial	Regional
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• In collaboration with provinces and territories monitor seasonal influenza activity including animal influenza• If there are animal outbreaks provide travel health information	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Share surveillance information with RHAs• Promote annual influenza immunization to target groups• Promote public health measures that reduce transmission of influenza• Promote healthy living practices	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Share surveillance information• Promote annual influenza immunization to target groups• Promote public health measures that reduce transmission of influenza• Manage influenza outbreak within the RHA jurisdiction following standard protocols• Promote healthy living practices

Table 8.1 – Continued.

Public Health Measures Pandemic Alert Period		
Phase 3 – New influenza subtype identified in at least one human case. No human transmission or rare cases of spread through very close contact only		
National	Provincial	Regional
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue activities of previous phase(s) • Review and update educational materials on all aspects of influenza for health care professionals, travellers, other special audiences and the general public 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue activities of previous phase(s) • Review and update educational materials on all aspects of influenza for health care professionals, travellers, other special audiences and the general public 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue activities of previous phase(s) • Case and contact management of any suspect cases of severe respiratory illness (SRI) identified by surveillance
Public Health Measures Pandemic Alert Period		
Phase 4 – Localized small clusters of limited human-to-human transmission		
National	Provincial	Regional
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue activities of previous phase(s) • Inform health professionals and public on key messages 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue activities of previous phase(s) • In conjunction with communication group develop public health messages as required • Ensure adequate resources are available to implement public health measures • Inform health professionals and public on key messages 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue activities of previous phase(s) • Ensure adequate resources are available to implement public health measures including isolation of cases • Inform health professionals and public on key messages
Public Health Measures Pandemic Alert Period		
Phase 5 – Localized larger clusters of human-to-human transmission		
National	Provincial	Regional
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue activities of previous phase(s) • Review national recommendations as per Annex M for public health management of cases and other control measures 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue activities of previous phase(s) • Review national recommendations as per Annex M for public health management of cases and other control measures and modify as necessary 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continue activities of previous phase(s) • Implement national public health measures • Implement infection control measures and personal protective practices

Table 8.1 – Continued.

National	Provincial	Regional
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Develop public education materials about infection control and personal protective measures	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Work with RHAs regarding the national public health guidelines• Distribute public education materials about infection control and personal protective measures	

Public Health Measures Pandemic Period Phase 6 – Increased and sustained transmission in general population		
National	Provincial	Regional
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Continue activities of previous phase(s)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Continue activities of previous phase(s)• Implement communications strategy• Distribute antiviral drugs and monitor their use• Distribute vaccines and monitor their use• Implement public health measures to reduce social contact as required• Promote self and family health care to reduce the need for clinic or hospital care	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Continue activities of previous phase(s)• Distribute antiviral drugs and monitor their use• Distribute vaccines and monitor their use• Implement public health measures to reduce social contact as required• Promote self and family health care to reduce the need for clinic or hospital care

Table 8.1 – Continued.

Public Health Measures Post-Pandemic Period Recovery		
National	Provincial	Regional
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Review activities; compile and analyze data and report• Evaluate response• Debrief with relevant partners• Revise pandemic plans based on review, evaluation and analysis• Return to Phase 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Review activities; compile and analyze data and report• Evaluate response• Debrief with relevant partners• Revise pandemic plans based on review, evaluation and analysis• Return to Phase 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Review activities; compile and analyze data and report• Evaluate response• Debrief with relevant partners• Revise pandemic plans based on review, evaluation and analysis• Return to Phase 1