Red Cross

• Largest humanitarian organization in the world
• Largest provider of First Aid education & training in 185 countries worldwide
• In Canada, Red Cross has MOUs with:
  - Canadian Medical Association (CMA)
  - Public Safety Canada
• Partner with Public Health Agency of Canada
Your Speakers Today

Louise Geoffrion
Program Manager, Planning, Monitoring and Evaluation, Disaster Management
Canadian Red Cross

Rick Caissie
National Manager First Aid Programs
Canadian Red Cross

Dr. Andrew MacPherson
Chair, Canadian Red Cross National Medical Advisory Committee
Chief, Department of Emergency Medicine, Vancouver Island Health Authority, Victoria
Overview

- What is Influenza?
- Pandemic Influenza
- Pandemic Preparedness
- Business Continuity Planning
- Personal Preparedness
Influenza

• “The flu,” is caused by viruses that infect the respiratory tract

• Up to 10% of Canada’s population is affected every year

• Can be life threatening for those with high-risk conditions
Viruses continually change over time, usually by mutation. This enables the virus to evade the immune system of its host, so that people are susceptible to influenza virus infection throughout their life.
Prophylaxis vs. Treatment

Prophylaxis

Vaccine

Injection of a killed microbe (virus or bacteria) in order to stimulate the immune system preventing or weakening the disease.

Treatment

Anti-viral agents

70% effective in reducing the severity and duration of symptoms when administered within 48 hours of illness onset.
Signs & Symptoms of Flu

- Fever (usually 37.8°C -39.4°C/100°F -103°F in adults, higher in children)
- Cough
- Sore throat
- Runny nose
- Headache
- Muscle aches and pains
- Extreme fatigue
Sporadic/Epidemic/Pandemic

- **Sporadic** - Individual cases of disease in widely separated geographic areas (independent cases)

- **Epidemic** - Sudden severe outbreak within a region or a group (Malaria in Africa)

- **Pandemic** - An epidemic becomes very widespread and affects a whole region, a continent, or the entire world
Pandemic Influenza

- May affect up to 35% of the Canadian population
- Every age may be at risk of serious illness
- Vaccine won’t be available at the beginning of the pandemic
- Occurs about three times each century
Recent Pandemics

1918: “Spanish Flu”
40-50 million deaths

1957: “Asian Flu”
2-4 million deaths

1968: “Hong Kong Flu”
1 million deaths
How Does An Influenza Pandemic Start?

- Virus emerges that is so different that few people, if any, have any immunity to it

- Spreads widely and rapidly, affecting hundreds of thousands of people

- May be the result of an animal virus and a human virus mixing to produce a new strain

- Animal virus usually comes from birds
Avian Influenza (Bird Flu)

- Wild birds are the main carriers
- Domestic birds (chickens and turkeys) get the virus from wild birds and may become seriously ill
- Risk in Canada is currently very low
- Humans can only get avian influenza (bird flu) by handling infected birds or coming in contact with contaminated feces
- Since 2003, there have been 332 confirmed cases of human transfer of Avian Influenza A(H5N1) resulting in 204 deaths*

* Cumulative number of confirmed human cases of Avian Influenza A/(H5N1) reported to WHO as of October 25, 2007
How Does An Influenza Pandemic Spread?

• Direct contact (within 1 to 2 metres) airborne transmission
• Indirect contact (surfaces*)

* Flu viruses can live on surfaces for up to 24 - 48 hours
How Many Canadians May Be Affected?

- Up to three waves lasting 6-8 weeks
- 4.5 - 10.6 million could be affected
- 2 - 5 million could require medical care
- 138,000 could require hospitalization
- Up to 58,000 deaths could occur
Bill C-12, The New Quarantine Act

- Intended to prevent the introduction and spread of a communicable disease arriving in, or departing from, Canada

- The proposed Act would repeal and replace the existing Quarantine Act (1872)

- Airlines, cargo ships, etc., required to report an illness or the death of a passenger before arrival or departure

- Minister of Health could be issued special powers of appointment and seizure
Public Preparedness

- Government officials may impose restrictions on activity, movement or travel to prevent the flu virus from spreading

- Schools, workplaces and public gatherings such as sporting events or worship services, may be closed temporarily

- Mass transportation such as subways, buses, trains and air travel may be limited
Business Continuity Planning

- Up to 25% of staff may be absent at one time. Does your existing continuity plan account for this kind of human resource interruptions?
- The businesses you rely on may experience the same absentee rates
- Disruptions may occur in the supply chain for raw materials, goods and services
- Return-to-work and travel policies may have to be adapted to control the spread of the virus among employees
Preparedness For Your Organization

- Identify a pandemic coordinator/team
- Identify critical positions and other critical inputs
- Train & prepare an ancillary workforce
- Establish an emergency communications plan
- Exercise/drill/test your plan annually
Preparedness For Employees/Customers

• Forecast employee absences during a pandemic

• Evaluate employee access and availability of healthcare and social services during a pandemic

• Identify employees and key customers with special needs and incorporate them in your plan

• Provide emergency contacts and chain of command
Establish Policies

- Employee compensation and sick-leave absences
- Flexible worksite and work hours
- Preventing influenza spread at/off the worksite
- Triggers to activate or deactivate your organization’s pandemic plan
Employee Education

- Inform employees on pandemic fundamentals
- Plan for addressing any fear and anxiety
- Establish a communication hotline or website
- Identify regional sources for accurate pandemic information
Coordinate With External Organizations

• Collaborate and communicate with regional health authorities

• Share best practices with other organizations

• Speak with suppliers, vendors and even competitors about how to collaborate
Personal Preparedness

• Wash your hands often, using plenty of soap and warm water

• Cover your mouth when you cough

• Use a tissue or a handkerchief when you sneeze

• If you become sick, stay at home

• Talk to your health care provider about the annual flu shot
Personal Preparedness

**Food** - 2-week supply
- No refrigeration, preparation or cooking
- Formula for infants or special nutritional needs
- Pets

**Water** - 2-4 litres/ person/day
- Use clean plastic containers
- No milk cartons or glass bottles

**Medical**
- Have extra prescription and non-prescription drugs and supplies
Personal Preparedness

• Store health/cleaning supplies

• Talk to family/loved ones about how they would be cared for if they get sick

• Find out now about your child’s school/day-care
Key Steps to Personal Preparedness

Know the risks
Make a plan
Prepare a kit

Red Cross Disaster Preparedness Kit
Disasters in Canada

Tornado, Manitoba, 2007

Hurricane Juan, Nova Scotia, 2003

Ice Storm, Quebec, 1998

Hurricane Juan, Nova Scotia, 2003
Resources Available

Preventing Disease Transmission Poster

Preventing Disease Transmission Fastguide
Additional information available

**National/Federal**
- Public Health Agency of Canada

- Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness Canada
  [www.psepc-sppcc.gc.ca](http://www.psepc-sppcc.gc.ca) or 1-800-484-8302

- Health Canada – Latest Headlines, Advisories and Warnings
  [www.hc-sc.gc.ca](http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca)

**International**
- World Health Organization Epidemic and Pandemic Alert and Response (EPR)
  [www.who.int](http://www.who.int)

- U.S. Centre for Disease Control (CDC)
  [www.cdc.gov/flu/pandemic](http://www.cdc.gov/flu/pandemic)
Canadian Red Cross

www.redcross.ca/flu

www.redcross.ca/firstaid
Registration Poll Results

**Business Continuity Plan for Disaster**

- Yes: 74%
- No: 16%
- Not specified: 10%

**Flu/illness Prevention Policies**

- Yes: 74%
- No: 20%
- Not specified: 6%
Thank you!