

NEWS Release

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Pandemic preparedness portal launched

Kingston, ON. – A Queen’s-led research group in partnership with the Ontario Hospital Association (OHA) is launching a new web portal in response to worldwide concerns about the threat of an influenza pandemic.

According to the Canadian Pandemic Influenza Plan, Canada could expect approximately 18,000 deaths, 46,000 hospitalizations, two million people seeking outpatient care, and another 2.4 million falling ill.

Called P5, the Being Prepared Is Being Protected Pandemic Portal Project is led by Queen’s professor of Community Health and Epidemiology Dick Zoutman, who is also director of Infection Control Services at Kingston General Hospital. It may be viewed at <http://www.pandemicportal.ca>

The new initiative offers a widely accessible web portal with information and education for hospital managers, clinical leaders and front-line healthcare workers on how to protect themselves and how to help hospitals plan effectively for a pandemic. The web site is dedicated to hospitals, with special attention paid to the unique challenges often faced by smaller hospitals in rural areas.

“This is really the ultimate planning exercise,” says Dr. Zoutman. “Hospitals need to be aware of the potential impact of a pandemic on their local healthcare delivery system and on their own facility. Planning for a future pandemic of infectious disease means grappling with a multitude of uncertainties for a hospital.”

Co-investigator with Dr. Zoutman is Dr. Brian Schwartz from Sunnybrook Health Sciences Centre. Also on the team from Queen’s are senior researcher Douglas Ford (Infection Control Research Unit) and P5 web master and content production associate Callie Gunn. Consultant Matt Melinyshyn is project manager.

The project was funded by The Change Foundation (TCF), an independent charitable foundation established by the Ontario Hospital Association. It involved a 2007 survey whose results supported the need for a comprehensive program to educate healthcare workers and help hospitals develop pandemic influenza plans.

The pandemic portal contains information on:

- Preparedness Assessment of Ontario Hospitals
- The History of Pandemics
- Overview of Planning
- Ethics

- Ontario Emergency Management Unit
- OHA Small Rural Northern Hospital Toolkit
- Pandemic Exercises
- Clinical Care
- Equipment and Supplies
- Incident Management System
- Assessment Centres
- Public Health
- Public Health Agency of Canada
- World Health Organization

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