August 27, 2009

Dear Child Day Care Operator:

Currently, Pandemic (H1N1) 2009 infection in Canada is causing mainly mild illness, with symptoms similar to seasonal influenza; however, we are seeing a wide spectrum of disease. The New Brunswick Department of Health is providing you with the information in this package to deal with this situation, and to prepare for the future.

Please continue to follow the practices and procedures in the Guide for Managing Potential Illness in Child Day Care Facilities in New Brunswick. If a Pandemic (H1N1) 2009 case is reported to your child day care by Public Health, it is important for you, your staff and the children’s parents to be ready to implement additional steps. Please refer to the enclosed “Health Advice” for the steps to take.

The information in this package reflects the most current advice issued by the Office of the Chief Medical Officer of Health for New Brunswick. In keeping with those guidelines, the New Brunswick Department of Health is not recommending that child day cares in the province close, even if there are cases of Pandemic (H1N1) 2009 identified in that day care. The resulting disruption would outweigh any potential benefits.

We encourage child day cares to continue:

- promoting good routine hygiene precautions such as frequent hand-washing, covering coughs and sneezes;
- encouraging children, and staff to stay home when ill and seek medical attention as necessary; and
- keeping common surfaces within the day care environment clean.

It is recognized that at times facilities may decide to temporarily close for reasons of excessive absenteeism (from any cause) among staff. If a facility affected by any respiratory illness is closed, dismissed children and staff should be encouraged not to congregate in large numbers in other settings.

For more information on the current situation, or on other matters related to child day cares, we encourage you to contact your Social Development Early Childhood Services Coordinator. For more information on Pandemic (H1N1) 2009, please feel free to contact your local RHA Public Health office during normal office hours. For the most up-to-date information on Pandemic (H1N1) 2009 at any time, please visit www.gnb.ca/flu or call our 24-hour Pandemic (H1N1) 2009 phone line at 1-800-580-0038. The website is updated almost daily and the phone line provides information, symptom triage, and health advice.

Dr. Eilish Cleary
Chief Medical Officer of Health
Health ADVICE - Issued by the Chief Medical Officer of Health

New Brunswick Child Day Cares Protocol
Cases of Pandemic (H1N1) 2009

Following is the Department of Health’s recommended protocol for dealing with issues involving children and staff members who are cases of Pandemic (H1N1) 2009. This information reflects the situation in New Brunswick as of August 27, 2009, and may be subject to change. Please verify that you have the latest version when using.

This protocol should be initiated when a child day care notices a case of Pandemic (H1N1) 2009. Prior to such confirmation, day cares are advised to follow general Public Health advice about this kind of situation – frequent hand-washing, cover coughs and sneezes, stay home when ill – and individuals within the day cares should follow their physician’s advice.

Any child or staff member who is sick with influenza-like symptoms (fever, cough, and one or more of the following: sore throat, body aches, and fatigue) should:

• be excluded from day care until s/he is free of symptoms, and feeling well;
• avoid crowds and public places. If children or staff members are sick with Pandemic (H1N1) 2009, they should stay home;
• minimize contact with other household members who are not sick by having one designated person care for their needs;
• continue using good hygiene practices (frequent hand washing, covering coughs and sneezes); and
• seek medical attention if necessary.

If a child becomes sick with influenza-like symptoms at day care, then he or she should be placed in a separate room from the well children; the parents / guardians should be contacted to take this child home. Staff members with these symptoms should go home as soon as possible.

If there has been a case of Pandemic (H1N1) 2009 in the day care, we recommend that a letter be sent home to all parents advising them to watch their child daily for symptoms; if they become sick, then they should stay at home (as above) and seek medical attention if necessary.
August xx, 2009

A / XX case(s) of Pandemic (H1N1) 2009 has/have been identified in your child’s day care. In line with current public health guidance, the closure of child day cares is not being recommended at this time, even when cases of Pandemic (H1N1) 2009 are identified at the child day care.

Please monitor your child for influenza-like illness (fever, cough and one or more of the following: sore throat, body aches and fatigue). If your child develops these symptoms, please follow the current public health advice on this issue, which includes staying home when sick, covering coughs and sneezes, and frequent hand-washing. If you are concerned about your child’s symptoms please see a health care provider. Your child should stay home until s/he is free of symptoms, and feeling well. Taking antiviral medication to prevent this disease in otherwise healthy people is not recommended at this time.

It is possible that further spread of this infection within the day care has already occurred, so it is important to review routine infection control measures with your child, such as frequent hand-washing, covering his/her coughs and sneezes, avoiding sharing personal items, and staying home when sick.

For more information on Pandemic (H1N1) 2009, please feel free to contact your local RHA Public Health office during normal office hours. For the most up-to-date information on Pandemic (H1N1) 2009 at any time, please visit www.gnb.ca/flu or call our 24-hour Pandemic (H1N1) 2009 phone line at 1-800-580-0038. The website is updated almost daily and the phone line provides information, symptom triage, and health advice.

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