



North Bay Parry Sound District
Health Unit

681 Commercial Street
North Bay, ON P1B 4E7
Tel: (705) 474-1400 or 1-800-563-2808
Fax: 474-8252
www.healthunit.biz

PUBLIC HEALTH NOTICE

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To: Colleges and University
From: Leeann Whitney, Director of Infectious Diseases
Subject: Update on influenza-like illness activity in the district

The North Bay Parry Sound District Health Unit has noted an increase in reports of Influenza-like illness (ILI) in the community with a definitive rise in schools reporting high absenteeism rates in all regions of our district.

Influenza-like illness (ILI) is the sudden onset of respiratory symptoms with fever and cough and one or more of the following symptoms: sore throat, muscle aches, joint pain, or fatigue.

It is essential to have strategies in place to prevent the spread of disease in the school-based settings. These strategies are not necessarily new but rather a reinforcement of the existing infection prevention and control practices to prevent or reduce the spread of influenza and procedures for dealing with staff, students and volunteers who become ill. To support this, the ministry has developed *Guidelines for the Prevention and Management of Pandemic (H1N1) 2009 in Colleges and Universities* which can be found at: <http://www.health.gov.on.ca/en/ccom/flu/h1n1/pro/>

With this in mind, we would also like to encourage you to refer to your business continuity plans to ensure timely and orderly continuation of your key operations to minimize the impact of ILI on your schools daily functions. A link providing additional resources on business continuity planning can also be found on the health unit's website should you require further information.

Please contact the **Communicable Disease Control Program** at (705) 474-1400 or toll-free at 1-800-563-2808 ext. 2229 should you have any additional questions on pH1N1, or visit our website at <http://www.healthunit.biz/h1n1.asp> .

*Please note that the **School Absenteeism Surveillance Report** can be found on the health unit's website at www.healthunit.biz under the heading "Surveillance and Reports. This report highlights ILL activity occurring within schools in all regions of our district.*