



# Government of the Northwest Territories Influenza Update

17 December 2009

## Flu Activity this Week

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H1N1 flu activity is declining and NWT public health officials are preparing for potential outbreaks of seasonal flu. NWT residents are reminded that they should get their seasonal flu shot to help protect themselves and their families.

There were no new hospital admissions for H1N1 influenza last week. Since mid-July 2009, a total of 52 people have been admitted to hospital with lab-confirmed H1N1. A total of 7 people were admitted to the ICU. The NWT had one H1N1 related death in an individual with chronic medical conditions.

The Health and Social Services Flu Line received 1 call last week and has now been officially discontinued. NWT residents with questions about the flu can continue to call the Health Line at 1-888-255-1010.

Beginning in the last week of September, the Flu Line received a total of 1,368 calls and made 427 referrals. Call volume peaked the week of October 26-30, with a total of 421 calls and 105 referrals.

## Developments/Announcements this Week

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The H1N1 vaccine will be available to students returning from the south at a drop-in flu clinic being held at the Yellowknife Public Health Unit on Tuesday, December 22 from 1:00-4:00 p.m. Students returning to other communities can get the shot at local public health clinics or community health centres.

The H1N1 mass vaccination campaign for the NWT has ended, but the vaccine is still available at local public health clinics and community health centres. People who receive their seasonal flu shot can also get the H1N1 shot if they have not previously done so.

**Family members with infants less than 6 months are strongly urged to get vaccinated against both H1N1 and seasonal influenza since infants less than 6 months are not eligible for H1N1 or seasonal flu vaccine.**

Children who have already received the H1N1 flu shot do not need to receive a second shot.

The H1N1 vaccine was made available in every community of the NWT and the GNWT had enough doses to vaccinate every NWT resident who wanted the shot. A total of 26,432 NWT residents – 62% of our population – received the H1N1 vaccine. This compares to a vaccination rate of 25% nationally.

While 75% coverage is ideal for combating the spread of H1N1 in our communities, the decline in flu activity in the NWT can be attributed to the rapid uptake of the H1N1 vaccine here.

## **Public Information**

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Minister of Health and Social Services Sandy Lee and Chief Public Health Officer Dr. Kami Kandola held a news conference on Monday, December 14<sup>th</sup> to provide a review of the NWT's H1N1 activities and statistics to date.

This week will mark the end of the *GNWT Influenza Update*. With flu activity declining substantially, the need for regular updates has also declined. The update may be re-started if H1N1 activity in the NWT begins to rise again.

A full range of information on the H1N1 vaccine, preventing the flu, caring for the sick and taking steps to protect individuals will continue to be available on the Health and Social Services website at <http://www.hlthss.gov.nt.ca>.

## **For more information**

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For more information about protecting yourself from the flu or about the GNWT's H1N1 plans and activities, please visit the Health and Social Services website at <http://www.hlthss.gov.nt.ca>. You may also call the Health Line at 1-888-255-1010.