

11. Equipment and Supplies

There were too few ambulances to carry the sick to the hospital, so mules pulled the ambulance carts until the mules, exhausted, stopped working. There were too few sheets for the beds ... There were too few beds, so several thousand cots were crammed into every square inch of corridor, storage area, meeting room, office, and veranda.

The Great Influenza, J.M. Barry

During an influenza pandemic, health settings will need large quantities of equipment and supplies to provide care and to protect health care workers. Under legislated Occupational Health and Safety requirements, employers in health settings and facilities are required to ensure that health care workers have received the appropriate training in infection prevention and control practices and have the necessary equipment to protect themselves and patients from exposure to influenza. More information can be found in Section 10, Infection Prevention and Control and Occupational Health and Safety Measures of this plan. Demand will be high worldwide, and traditional supply chains may break down. The health system must take steps to have an adequate stock of equipment and supplies to meet increased patient care needs and to protect health care workers, access to back up supplies, and an efficient system for purchasing, storing and distributing those supplies.

In early 2006, the Ministry of Health and Long Term Care (MOHLTC) began developing and implementing a comprehensive pandemic procurement strategy to purchase and warehouse critical health care supplies. This strategy includes building:

- a stockpile of personal protective equipment
- a system for purchasing, storing and distributing supplies
- a process to manage perishable supplies.

The MOHLTC is currently focused on procuring infection control and mass vaccination supplies. These items are priorities because they provide critical protection for health care providers and their patients and will be in short supply in a pandemic.

11.1 Objectives

1. To recommend that all health settings/facilities in Peterborough City and County maintain a four-week stockpile of equipment and supplies for use during a pandemic.
2. To maintain a list of suppliers to supplement equipment stockpiles when settings run low or if the usual supply chains fail.
3. To develop an effective system for procuring, storing and distributing equipment and supplies.

11.2 Equipment and Supply Targets

To be able to respond effectively to a pandemic and avoid supply chain problems, the MOHLTC is asking all health settings/providers to plan for and maintain a four-week stockpile of personal protective equipment and other critical supplies. This will give organizations and practices surge capacity and ensure business continuity for the first wave of the pandemic (estimated to be six to eight weeks).

If and when organizations exhaust their stockpile, the MOHLTC is developing a four-week provincial stockpile that organizations can access. This four-week provincial stockpile can be used until regular supply chains can be re-established.

To access the ministry stockpile during a pandemic, health settings and facilities should contact the Ministry Emergency Operations Centre.

Community physician offices, community health centres and midwives have received a seven day emergency infection control kit from the MOHLTC to provide extra emergency response capacity. These are to be used during a respiratory disease outbreak.

11.3 Planning for Generic Supplies

The PCCHU recommends that all health settings and facilities utilize the MOHLTC templates to assist in ordering the one month stockpile of equipment and supplies. These supplies will be used to provide care for people with influenza in the community and in hospital – including personal protective equipment (PPE) and diagnostic equipment and supplies for direct patient care until the MOHLTC supplements arrive. The templates can be found in see Ontario Health Plan for an Influenza Pandemic, Equipment and Supply Tools, Chapter 10A, at: http://www.health.gov.on.ca/english/providers/program/emu/pan_flu/pan_flu_plan.html. The formulae used in the templates to calculate quantities are based on the assumption that – during a pandemic – both facility and provincial four-week stockpiles will require supplies of equipment and supplies over and above those normally required to deliver patient care and to protect staff and their patients/clients over a four-week period. The formula for estimating requirements is based on the 35% pandemic attack rate or a 35% surge capacity requirement, which is the assumption for pandemic planning in Ontario.

11.4. PCCHU Equipment Stockpile

The PCCHU has purchased a four-week stockpile as per the supply and equipment template outlined in the OHPIP for use during a pandemic by Health Unit employees.