

School Based Influenza-Like Illness (ILI) Surveillance in the Winnipeg Health Region

Overview

School-based surveillance is one component of an integrated surveillance system intended to provide **early** detection of illness due to influenza in the community. Each fall, schools have been encouraged to report to Public Health absenteeism rates (10% or more) associated with ILI in the school community on any one day. Nasopharyngeal (NP) swabs may be requested on a number of children who have exhibited ILI symptoms for 24 hours or less. Once influenza activity has been confirmed, surveillance is typically discontinued in the region until or unless significant time has lapsed and/or a different type of influenza is suspected.

Recommendation for Consideration

Enhance school-based ILI surveillance in the Winnipeg Health Region beginning September 2009 to:

- Detect the early re-emergence of clusters of novel H1N1 influenza A virus in the community
- Monitor and describe the extent of ILI in the region
- Report unusual clusters (non-nominally) to the Public Health Agency of Canada via Manitoba Health and Healthy Living

Definitions

- ILI: *Fever and cough* Or *Fever and sore throat*.
- Absenteeism: *Unusually high* absenteeism. For guidance, schools may use 10% absenteeism (beyond usual seasonal baseline) associated with ILI in the school community on any one day.

Reporting requirements

- *Schools*: Schools will notify the Public Health Nurse (PHN) by phone when absenteeism due to ILI is unusually high or exceeds 10% beyond usual seasonal baseline. The attached template may be utilized to report absenteeism. After the first notification, schools may report ongoing absenteeism on a weekly basis.

*****In order to characterize the reason for student absenteeism, schools are encouraged to ask about symptoms when speaking with parents/guardians/students.***

***** As well, schools are encouraged to notify parents/guardians/students that Public Health will be notified when absenteeism exceeds 10% and that requests for influenza testing may follow.***

Public Health Follow-Up

- PHNs will review absenteeism reports with the school; and in consultation with the CD Coordinator and Medical Officer of Health (MOH), determine if testing is recommended. If the decision to proceed with testing is made, the Public Health Nurse will work with the school to determine the preferred process to access symptomatic children at home to obtain a nasopharyngeal (NP) swab. Individual results of the test will be provided to parents once they are known. Results will not be conveyed to the school. WRHA will communicate generally that H1N1 has been detected in a WHR school.
- Once the novel H1N1 influenza A virus has been confirmed, school-based influenza testing will be suspended. If the presence of the virus is confirmed within the region via other surveillance processes, school-based influenza testing will not be necessary. However, school notification and reporting will continue after the virus is confirmed to monitor the extent of ILI in the region and to report unusual clusters of illness to the Public Health Agency of Canada.
- Public health follow-up may be modified as the pandemic progresses. For example, school-based laboratory testing may be re-activated to confirm the cause of illness, and/or the PHN response may be altered.

Influenza-Like Illness (ILI) Notification

Name of School / Child Care Centre:

	Notification Date:
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Contact Person:

	Phone:	Fax:
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Absenteeism due to ILI: *Unusually high* absenteeism. For guidance, schools may use 10% absenteeism (beyond usual seasonal baseline) associated with ILI in the school community on any one day.

Number of students absent:	Total Enrolment:
Comments:	

Please notify your Public Health Nurse.
Please fax to Public Health at 940.2690.