MEDICAL ADVISORY
Confirmed Influenza Case in Hamilton (2021-2022 Season)

TO: Family Physicians
    Emergency Departments
    Infectious Disease Physicians
    Infection Control Professionals

FOR YOUR INFORMATION:
    Central West Medical Officers of Health
    Academy of Medicine
    Dr. Michael Stacey, VP Medical, Hamilton Health Sciences
    Mr. Bruce Squires, President, McMaster Children's Hospital
    Dr. David Russell, Chief of Staff, St. Joseph’s Healthcare
    LHIN, Dr. Jennifer Everson, Primary Care Lead and Dr. Bill Krizmanich, Emergency
    Department Lead.

FROM: Dr. Bart Harvey, Associate Medical Officer of Health

DATE: April 6, 2022

Background
Hamilton Public Health Services (PHS) is notifying health care providers that we have
received notification of five (5) laboratory confirmed cases of Influenza A. These are the
first influenza cases in Hamilton since March 30, 2020.

With increased COVID-19 transmission in Hamilton, as reflected by an increasing
number of reported cases, increased test positivity, an increase in hospital admissions
and an increasing wastewater signal, this medical advisory serves as a reminder that
other communicable diseases of public health significance, including influenza, are
circulating in our community, although COVID-19 remains the most predominant.
Currently, low levels of influenza activity are being detected locally, with no lab
confirmed influenza outbreaks to date in the 2021-2022 influenza season, and
respiratory/influenza like-illness surveillance below historic activity levels. Influenza
activity typically peaks between December and March. Health care providers and staff
should have a heightened awareness of respiratory symptoms and consider influenza
as a causative agent. The preferred and most sensitive method of diagnosis is a
nasopharyngeal swab.

All Hamiltonians are encouraged to use protective measures to reduce serious health
consequences from COVID-19 and influenza:

- Get vaccinated and stay up-to-date with vaccines
- Wear a mask when indoors and/or unable to distance
- Stay home if you have influenza-like symptoms
- Practice physical distancing
- Know in advance if you are eligible for treatment and where to access.
All health care workers are strongly recommended to receive the influenza vaccine. Health care providers are encouraged to offer flu vaccinations to all patients, beginning with priority populations. Please visit our website at www.hamilton.ca/flu for additional educational resources.

Treatment
Treatment with the antivirals, oseltamivir (Tamiflu®) or Zanamivir (Relenza®) is recommended for:
- Patients with Influenza-like-illness (ILI) who are at risk for complications; OR
- Patients who have moderate to severe ILI (e.g. Hospitalized patients).
Treatment works best if started within 48 hours of symptom onset.
To access the full Influenza Antiviral Treatment guidance document, visit the Public Health Ontario Influenza page at https://www.publichealthontario.ca/en/diseases-and-conditions/infectious-diseases/respiratory-diseases/influenza.

Reporting Requirements
Influenza is reportable to the Medical Officer of Health under the Health Protection and Promotion Act, R.S.O. 1990, c. H.7.

If you are seeing unusual flu-like activity this month, please call PHS at 905-546-2063.

To report confirmed cases of Influenza please fax the Infectious Disease Program at 905-546-4078.