

## Attachment 2

**Ministry of Health  
and Long-Term Care**

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**Ministère de la Santé  
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**DEC 08 2006**

Francine Adamo  
Secretariat  
Toronto Board of Health  
100 Queens St. West, 10<sup>th</sup> Floor West  
Toronto, ON M5H 2N2

December 7, 2006

Dear Ms. Adamo,

I am writing in response to your letter to the Minister of Health and Long-Term Care in which you request that the ministry designate a lead agency for planning for the implementation of alternate assessment, treatment and referral centres (Flu Centres) in the City of Toronto in the event of an influenza pandemic. I apologize for the delay in responding as I understand that your letter was originally sent on September 15, 2006. However, we were not aware that the letter existed until we were advised by Toronto Public Health at a meeting on November 17<sup>th</sup>, 2006. We still were unable to locate the letter internally so Toronto Public Health sent us a copy for a response on December 1<sup>st</sup>, 2006. Again, I apologize for the inconvenience and the lateness of our reply.

As per the Ontario Health Plan for and Influenza Pandemic (OHPIP), Flu Centres are to be implemented to meet the population's need for influenza assessment, baseline treatment and referral services during an influenza pandemic. The objective of this strategy is to ensure that hospitals are able to focus on treating people who are critically ill and that primary care providers are able to continue to provide a range of health services, while meeting the overwhelming need for influenza assessment and treatment. The OHPIP specifies that it is a local responsibility to plan for the implementation of Flu Centres, however, detailed guidelines for developing Flu Centres, including infrastructure and staffing requirements are provided in Chapter 11 of the OHPIP, as well as common assessment and referral forms to assist local planners to assist local level pandemic planners.

Furthermore, Chapter 11 recommends that an advisory committee be struck at the local level to oversee the development of this strategy and that the membership include community-based health care providers, hospitals, public health, municipal emergency management services, policing services and other key municipal stakeholders. Given the position of Toronto Public Health as the lead for developing

the local pandemic plan for the greater Toronto healthcare system and also as the primary health contact for municipal emergency management organizations, it is recommended that Toronto Public Health take the lead for planning for the implementation of flu centres. It should be noted that initiating the planning process does not mean that Toronto Public Health automatically leads the management of the flu centres in a pandemic. This is an issue that would be discussed and resolved in the planning process.

As acknowledged in the OHPIP, there is still much work required to address some important outstanding issues such as legal issues, licensing and scope of practice issues, the use of medical directives and temporary licenses, and financial compensation for people who work in these centres. In addition, the funding roles and responsibilities between the provinces and municipalities have not yet been determined. We anticipate being in a position to provide some guidance in this area in the future, but recommend that planning for the implementation of this community-based model begin as soon as possible.

I would like to thank the Toronto Board of Health for their continued interest and participation in pandemic planning and the hard work undertaken in this area by the city to date.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Allison J. Stuart', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Allison J. Stuart  
Director, Emergency Management Unit

Cc: Dr. George Pasut, A/Chief Medical Officer of Health, Public Health Division  
Ruth Hawkins, A/Assistant Deputy Minister, Public Health Division