

Pandemic Influenza Stockpiling Requirements – Status of Intergovernmental Discussions

Date:	March 19, 2008
To:	Executive Committee
From:	City Manager Medical Officer of Health Deputy City Manager and Chief Financial Officer
Wards:	All Wards
Reference Number:	

SUMMARY

This report responds to the Executive Committee’s request to the Mayor and City Manager to undertake discussions with the Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM) and the Ontario Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care regarding the City’s influenza pandemic planning and preparedness process and issues arising as a result.

The intent of these discussions was to seek support through FCM for engaging the federal government on municipal concerns around influenza pandemic planning, including the establishment of a working group of interested municipalities, and to request the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care to assist in finding ways to minimize financial loss to all government and government funded bodies on the stockpiling of antiviral medications in the event that the stockpiled supplies expire and can no longer be used before a pandemic occurs.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The City Manager, Medical Officer of Health and Deputy City Manger – Chief Financial Officer recommend that:

1. the antiviral medication Oseltamivir (Tamiflu) in the total amount of \$1,541,719.00 be purchased from Hoffman-LaRoche Ltd. for staff who as part of their work are expected to provide direct care to persons who are ill with influenza;

2. Expenditures totalling \$606,000.00 be approved to set up a warehousing and distribution system for pandemic influenza supplies;
3. the 2008 Non-Program Operating Budget, Other Corporate Expenditures, be increased by \$1,541,719 gross, \$0 net; and the 2008 Office of the Treasurer's 2008 Operating Budget be increased by \$606,000.00 gross, \$0 net; for a total of \$2,147,719.00 to be funded from the City's Emergency Planning Reserve Fund;
4. the Deputy City Manager and Chief Financial Officer report to the Budget Committee in 2008 on funding options for the remaining stockpiling requirements for pandemic influenza preparedness as outlined in the financial impact statement of the January 24, 2008 report from the City Manager, Medical Officer of Health and Deputy City Manager and Chief Financial Officer;
5. the City Manager, Medical Officer of Health and Deputy City Manager – Chief Financial Officer report back to Executive Committee before the end of 2008 on the status of consultations with both the Federal and Provincial Governments; and
6. the appropriate City officials be authorized and directed to take the necessary action to give effect thereto.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

Of the total \$27.450 million identified in the January 24, 2008 stockpiling report required for the City's influenza pandemic preparedness, this report recommends commitments to purchase Oseltamivir (Tamilflu) totalling \$1.542 million and expenditures to set up a warehouse and distribution system totalling \$0.606 million in 2008. With the exception of ongoing costs of warehousing staff of \$0.136 million, all expenditures are one-time. Thus, the total estimated 2008 expenditures of \$2.148 million will be funded from the City's Emergency Planning Reserve Fund with a current balance of \$5.1 million.

Pending the result of consultations with both the federal and provincial governments, additional expenditures may be required to further purchase antiviral medications. Staff will report back to Executive Committee before the end of 2008 on the status of these consultations and as indicated in the January 24, 2008 report to Executive Committee, the Deputy City Manager and Chief Financial Officer will report to Budget Committee in 2008 on a funding source for the remaining requirements for PPE and infection control supplies, antiviral medications, stockpiling costs for 8 weeks of operational supplies and ongoing staffing costs for warehousing.

DECISION HISTORY

On February 6, 2008 Executive Committee deferred consideration of the report from the City Manager, Medical Officer of Health, Deputy City Manager and Chief Financial Officer respecting stockpiling requirements for Influenza Pandemic Preparedness until the April 7, 2008 meeting of the Executive Committee.

In the interim the Mayor was requested to take the necessary intergovernmental steps to implement recommendations 5, 6, and 7 contained in the stockpiling report. Specifically City Council was to request the Provincial Minister of Health and Long-Term Care to explore with the suppliers of Oseltamivir (tamiflu) and Zanamivir (Relenza), on behalf of all government or government funded bodies in Ontario that need to stockpile these products, ways to minimize financial loss in stockpiling of these antivirals in the event that the stockpiled supplies expire and can no longer be used before a pandemic occurs.

In addition it was requested that the report be forwarded to all single and regional tier municipalities in Ontario with a request that they support the recommendation on minimizing financial loss as well as Provincial partnership funding of antiviral medication, personal protective equipment and infection control supplies.

COMMENTS

On February 25, 2008 the Mayor wrote to the Chair of the Federation of Canadian Municipalities' Standing Committee on Community Safety and Crime Prevention (CSCP) to request the committee's support in positioning the FCM to engage the federal government. Councillors McConnell and Hall spoke to the Mayor's request at the standing committee's meeting on March 7, 2008 and Councillor Hall introduced a motion "that the FCM establish a working group of concerned municipalities to examine next steps and strategies to engage the federal government and gain a seat at the table on federal/provincial/territorial committees established to discuss influenza pandemic planning nationally". This motion was adopted unanimously by the FCM's National Board of Directors on March 8, 2008.

On March 13, 2008, FCM began to canvass its CSCP committee and Big City Mayors' Caucus membership for staff to join the working group. Toronto officials will participate in this staff level working group. At the time of writing, efforts were already underway to convene the initial conference call meeting in early April. It is anticipated that the working group will define the nature and scope of the problems requiring discussion with the other governments, gather and share intelligence, identify resources and devise a plan of action.

The FCM Board of Directors also updated the strategies in its policy statement on emergency management to include efforts:

- "to work with the Canadian Public Health Agency and Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness Canada to ensure that municipal governments are involved in pandemic planning and that these plans are communicated to municipalities once they are developed"; and
- "to work with the Canadian Public Health Agency to ensure that the next iteration of the Canadian Pandemic Influenza Plan for the Health Sector reflects extensive consultation with the municipal sector and is adaptable to local response plans."

The updated policy statement will be presented to the FCM membership at the Annual General Meeting in June 2008.

On February 15, 2008 the City Manager requested influenza pandemic preparedness be placed on the Ontario Regional Chief Administrative Officers' agenda for discussion. Through this discussion it became clear that most of the municipalities in Ontario have not made decisions regarding the stockpiling of antiviral medications and are awaiting provincial and/or federal guidelines to assist them in their influenza pandemic planning process.

On March 5, 2008 the City Manager and Medical Officer of Health met with Ontario's Chief Medical Officer of Health as well as the Assistant Deputy Minister responsible for influenza pandemic planning in the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care. Staff were informed that with regard to the status of guidelines from the federal, provincial and territorial governments, a series of recommendations regarding the stockpiling of antiviral medications and the use of these medications for prophylactic purposes are currently with the Deputy Ministers of Health for consideration. These recommendations will be presented as part of a consultation process expected to be launched with significant partners, including Toronto, in the next month or so. The result of these consultations will provide input into a fall 2008 meeting with the Ministers of Health. Currently the Province of Ontario has not developed a position regarding the stockpiling of antiviral medications for prophylactic purposes and it is not clear when or if a position will be forthcoming outside of the above federal/provincial/territorial process.

In terms of negotiation of best price with the sole source provider of antiviral medications, the Province of Ontario falls under the federal government purchasing agreement which guarantees the best price for government purchasing of these medications. Currently the City of Toronto qualifies for this price. Staff from the City of Toronto will work with staff responsible for stockpiling of critical supplies in the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care to discuss specific details of the arrangements with the Federal Government. It is clear, however, that they have not been successful in negotiating various options with the sole source provider, including maintaining a revolving stockpile or using the stock for other purposes as it nears the end of its shelf life.

With the work that is about to be launched at the federal level, it is important that the City give sufficient time to ensure municipal concerns are discussed and heard nationally. It is therefore recommended that staff report back before the end of 2008 on the status of these intergovernmental discussions. However, there is still an immediate need for the City to prepare for a possible influenza pandemic. As the intergovernmental process will take several months to complete, and given the 12-18 month purchasing requirement for Oseltamivir, it is recommended that the City begin to stockpile this antiviral medication for staff who as part of their work are expected to provide direct care to persons ill with influenza. These staff include Toronto Public Health, Homes for the Aged, Children's Services, Emergency Medical Services and Shelter, Support, Housing and Administration. The recommendation is based on increased risk of exposure in the workplace for these staff. It is also suggested that the decision regarding stockpiling for staff providing essential services and key decision makers (i.e. Toronto

Police Services, Toronto Fire Services, Toronto Transit Commission, Toronto Water, the Mayor and Members of Council) be deferred pending the outcome of these intergovernmental discussions and consultations.

By purchasing antiviral medications for staff with increased risk of exposure, the City is providing some assurance it has the ability to respond to medical emergencies in the event an influenza pandemic strikes while still allowing the discussion on the establishment of guidelines and financing concerns regarding antiviral medications to continue as a next step.

It is important to note that the purchase of this limited quantity of antiviral medication does not negate the need to purchase personal protective equipment and infection control supplies for City staff as well as operational supplies necessary to maintain critical services. As such the January 24, 2008 staff recommendation to provide funding totalling \$0.606 million for the establishment of a warehousing and distribution system to store influenza pandemic supplies is still valid. As well it will be necessary for the Deputy City Manager and Chief Financial Officer to report back to the Budget Committee in 2008 on options for funding the remaining stockpiling requirements as identified in the January 24, 2008 report to Executive Committee.

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