



**Fact Sheet on
The Tripartite Evaluation of the H1N1 Pandemic Response
In First Nations in British Columbia**

Do you remember how concerned we were about H1N1 last year? We are all glad that the H1N1 influenza pandemic is over, but what did we learn from the experience? Can we apply what we learned in future flu seasons? This is important because every year the flu still causes illness and contributes to deaths in our communities, and no one knows when another pandemic might occur.

Are you aware of the good work achieved in First Nations communities?

- First Nations leaders, Health Directors, health care workers and community members should feel proud of the work they did to manage the H1N1 flu occurrence and prevent H1N1 illnesses.
- About three times as many First Nations were vaccinated for H1N1 as in the general population of British Columbia. For many, this was the first time they had a vaccination. Community members and nursing staff worked hard to make this happen.

What worked during the H1N1 pandemic

Public Health Officials Worked Together...

- ✓ First Nations public health leadership - Dr. Evan Adams and Dr. Shannon Waters - helped focus the pandemic response efforts, while providing a First Nations perspective.
- ✓ Good relationships with the local Medical Health Officer and health staff at First Nations and Inuit Health (BC Region) allowed for a more streamlined response.
- ✓ The Province, Health Canada, and Community Nursing ensured that anti-viral medications were available for treatment – especially for those at higher risk.

Communities Responded...

- ✓ Communities saw the value of having practical and up-to-date pandemic plans that were integrated with the regional health authority.

- ✓ Communities saw the value of keeping everyone informed and answering questions about the flu through town-hall meetings, Facebook, emails, newsletters, posters and handouts delivered door to door.
- ✓ Community members were vaccinated and encouraged their friends and family to do the same.
- ✓ People were encouraged to wash their hands. Communities installed hand sanitizer stations and put up posters encouraging people to sneeze into their sleeves.
- ✓ People wore gloves when serving food or used pre-wrapped food for community dinners.
- ✓ Community events were modified or postponed if necessary.
- ✓ The ill were encouraged to stay home, to avoid spreading illness.
- ✓ Community members looked out for each other.

Getting ready for the next pandemic

The H1N1 pandemic of 2009-2010 turned out to be less severe than expected. There are things your community can do to prepare for the next pandemic:

- ✓ Health care providers and Health Directors can continue developing a relationship with the local Medical Health Officer and First Nations and Inuit Health staff. If these relationships are built now, it will be easier to know who to call during an emergency.
 - ✓ Determine the best way of getting information to the people in your community who need to know about the flu (i.e., Chief, Band Council, Health Directors, health care providers and community members).
 - ✓ Make sure your community either develops or updates your community pandemic plan. Your local decision-makers should be involved in its creation or revision; and it should contain practical advice that makes the most of your community's resources.
 - ✓ Work with your local health authority and FNIH to provide access to anti-virals, as needed, as well as the influenza vaccine (seasonal and/or pandemic.)
 - ✓ Offer the vaccination to community members as soon as the vaccine is available.
- ✓ If you or someone you know wants to become a doctor, nurse, community health representative, or allied health professional (eg physiotherapist, mid-wife, nutritionist) encourage them to pursue their goal. The more health care workers your community has, the better able you will be to manage whatever health issues arise in the future. Educational funding may be available through your Band or Tribal Council.

FOR MORE INFORMATION

Would you like to have the opportunity to discuss the response to the H1N1 pandemic in BC First Nations?

Join the UBC Learning Circle on February 16th, 2011 from 10:30-noon.

How do I participate/ connect?

To participate please fill out our [Event Registration Form](#) or contact Jamie Witt at aph.assistant2@familymed.ubc.ca.

For more information on how you can help loved ones and those ill with influenza see: <http://www.cha-bc.org/index.php/Family-Health-Care.html>

For more information on planning for the next pandemic, contact your Health Authority or First Nations and Inuit Health representative.

This fact sheet was compiled from an evaluation of the H1N1 pandemic response in BC First Nations communities. The evaluation was sponsored by the First Nations Health Council, First Nations and Inuit Health (BC region), and the BC Ministry of Health Services. These organizations, known as the 'Tripartite partners', worked together during the H1N1 pandemic to support First Nations in BC. This evaluation received feedback from over 200 First Nations community members, Elders, Chiefs, school principals, community health nurses, community health representatives, Health Directors, and drug/alcohol counselors from 15 communities between March and May 2010.