

# H1N1 Flu in Manitoba

PANDEMIC FLU PLAN - FALL/WINTER 2009

SEPTEMBER 2009



---

## H1N1 Pandemic Flu Plan – Fall/Winter 2009

Manitoba will invest \$47 million into key areas of the health care sector to protect the health of Manitobans during the second wave of H1N1 pandemic flu this fall.

Manitoba experienced the first wave of pandemic flu this spring and summer and is preparing for an expected second wave of H1N1 pandemic flu this fall and winter. Based on the experience of the spring and what has occurred in the southern hemisphere during their traditional flu season, it is anticipated that the disease will continue to be relatively mild for most Manitobans. It is, however, important to plan for expected severe disease as there are still unknowns about this pandemic flu.

Manitoba's health emergency coordination centre and the incident command system were activated on April 24, 2009 and the province's pandemic response plan was implemented in the spring along with the plans of regional health authorities (RHAs), health care organizations, the federal government and First Nations and Metis groups. The experiences of the spring have laid the groundwork for the fall. See the flu website at [www.manitoba.ca](http://www.manitoba.ca) for the most up-to-date information.

This fall, the province is investing more than \$47 million to deal with the next wave of the H1N1 pandemic flu. Activities underway or planned include:

- 1. Protecting Manitobans – Prevention:** more than \$21.8 million to purchase, store and distribute vaccine for pandemic H1N1 influenza;
- 2. Caring for Manitobans:** more than \$5.7 million to increase intensive care and surgical capacity by hiring staff, purchasing more equipment and supplies, and for additional supplies of antivirals;
- 3. Supporting the Front Lines:** more than \$16.8 million to purchase additional masks, gloves, gowns and other protective equipment for health care providers;
- 4. Working for Manitobans:** more than \$3.1 million for laboratory testing equipment, additional public health staff and to provide information to the public about the pandemic and personal precautions; and
- 5. Keeping Manitobans Moving:** from home flu kits and workplace preps, there is a role for everyone to prepare for H1N1 pandemic flu.

---

## Protecting Manitobans – Prevention

More than \$21.8 million will be used to purchase, store, distribute and administer vaccine for H1N1 pandemic influenza.

### Universal H1N1 Vaccine

Vaccination is expected to be one of the most effective ways to protect the public from a pandemic influenza. Manitoba is expecting to receive 1,825,745 does of H1N1 pandemic flu vaccine when it is ready.

When available from the federal government, the vaccine is expected to arrive in batches over a period of weeks. The scientific data is currently being reviewed nationally to identify who will need the vaccine first because of risk associated with severe disease and an individual's role in responding to H1N1 flu. Manitoba's Chief Provincial Public Health Officer will determine Manitoba's list of who needs the H1N1 vaccine the most based on provincial evidence and taking into account advice from the Public Health Agency of Canada and the World Health Organization. Manitoba has already identified First Nations and Metis populations as an important population to focus on given the Manitoba experience during the first wave of H1N1 pandemic flu in the spring.

The province, the RHAs and Health Canada's First Nations and Inuit Health (FNIH) are already planning for mass immunization clinics at the regional and local level to provide the vaccine to Manitobans once it is available. RHAs are engaged with local organizations like arenas, community centres, schools and seniors' housing centres to plan for immunization clinics. Volunteers will play a key role in immunization clinics. Interested people should contact their RHA for more about how they can help. Advertising, media announcements and web-based information will keep Manitobans up-to-date about the latest information.

### Seasonal Flu Vaccine

Once again this year, the province is promoting the seasonal flu vaccine program to protect Manitobans against other flu strains that are expected to circulate in Canada this fall and winter. A seasonal flu vaccination campaign occurs every year. This fall, there may be two vaccine campaigns – one for the usual seasonal flu and the second for the H1N1 pandemic flu. This will depend on the delivery of vaccine and plans will be adapted for either joint or separate seasonal/H1N1 flu vaccine programs.

---

## Caring For Manitobans

More than \$5.7 million will be invested to increase intensive care and surgical capacity by hiring staff and purchasing more antivirals, equipment and supplies.

### Expanding ICU capacity

Manitoba has 183 intensive care unit (ICU) beds available and this fall an additional 10 beds – six for adults and four for children will be available in Winnipeg. Additional front line staff, diagnostic tests, supplies and equipment will be available to put these beds into use as needed. There are also contingency plans to further increase ICU capacity if needed, potentially doubling the capacity to care for patients on ventilators.

Manitoba experienced an unusual demand for ICU services this spring and many people required long-term support on ventilators, which is unusual with influenza. These additional beds will help the health care system cope with the potential demand and reduce the impact on services in other areas of the health care system. In addition to the ICU beds, there are 186 ventilators and 122 isolation rooms to treat those who are severely ill with the flu.

Both Winnipeg and Brandon regional health authorities are finalizing plans to convert other specialized beds (post-surgery/surgical recovery rooms) into ICU beds as required. If there are sudden increases in the number of patients who are severely ill and require ICU care, then these specialized beds will be quickly converted from their usual use to provide more intensive care capacity.

### Surge Capacity

Manitoba Health and Healthy Living and the regional health authorities' plans for providing health care services this fall include:

- managing the availability of acute care beds;
- reducing the spread of infection in hospitals and other health care facilities;
- participating in a mass provincial vaccination program; and
- distributing antivirals as per provincial guidelines.

Planning for potential surges in the number of people who need care includes:

- increasing intensive care capacity;
- establishing specialized clinics for milder cases of flu;
- moving services and staff from one facility to another to ensure continuity of care;
- prioritizing patients for personal-care home beds;
- redirecting non-urgent surgical procedures to other facilities during times of heavy demand; and
- monitoring basic air ambulance and Lifeflight capacity to support the efficient dispatch of these resources.

Currently, it is expected that surgery schedules will remain on track. However, depending on the situation this fall, there is the possibility that other areas of the health care system will have to reduce services. This could affect elective surgeries, hospital visitors and the way ERs manage patients. All RHAs have essential services plans to keep priority health care services in place while reducing others if circumstances require such action. All options are being carefully examined in consultation with health care professionals and RHAs. It will be important to ensure health care professionals are able to respond to the demands of the pandemic flu.

In addition, the department will collaborate with RHAs and FNIH of Health Canada to strengthen primary care services.

### **First Nations and Metis Peoples**

In the spring during the first wave of pandemic H1N1 flu, First Nations and Metis people in Manitoba experienced proportionally more disease, particularly serious disease where individuals required intensive care in hospitals. To help address this issue, Manitoba set up a tri-partite table involving the province, the federal government and First Nations and Metis organizations to support ongoing communication and problem-solving efforts around H1N1 flu response. The Manitoba government is also supporting the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs in providing flu kits for First Nations, and working with other partners to provide for Metis and Northern Affairs communities this fall. Targeted communications materials will be made available in First Nations communities. In June, the Manitoba government partnered with the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs, Manitoba Keewatinowi Okimakanak, the Southern Chiefs Organization, Manitoba Metis Federation and the federal government to provide training sessions to First Nations emergency managers to support ongoing preparedness and responses at the community level. First Nations communities have identified incident commanders who can link into the provincial incident command structure as needed.

### **Antiviral Stockpile**

Manitoba has a provincial stockpile of antivirals, established in partnership with the federal government. It is based on Manitoba's population and is intended to serve all Manitobans. This stockpile is available to regional health authorities and Health Canada if additional supplies are needed to care for people who need antiviral treatment. Manitoba currently has 176,000 treatment courses of antivirals. This is in addition to the regular supplies of antivirals normally found in pharmacies, clinics, hospitals and other health care settings.

---

## Supporting the Front Lines – Working with Health Care Professionals

More than \$16.8 million will be used to purchase additional masks, gloves, gowns and other protective equipment for health care providers. This is in addition to the \$12 million invested in the spring.

The work of frontline health care providers and their unions has been instrumental in Manitoba's response to the H1N1 pandemic flu. It is important to keep health care workers healthy so they can continue caring for others. To this end, Manitoba has already purchased and distributed a range of protective equipment for health care providers, including masks, gowns, eye shields and gloves and is buying more. This stockpile is over and above the normal supplies that the health care system buys and stocks for normal operations. Manitoba currently has enough supplies for the health care system to last eight weeks if there is a disruption in the normal supply chain or delivery problems in the fall. Guidelines for the use of personal protective equipment will continue to be updated based on the best scientific evidence and advice available.

Current Manitoba Supply Stockpile (over and above normal supplies)	
N-95 respirators	2,198,240
Surgical masks	28,358,000
Hand sanitizer	29,016 bottles
Gowns	1,895,000
Eye protection	3,101,700
Gloves	731,000
Tamiflu	176,000 treatment courses

In June, the Minister of Health called on health professionals to assist in providing needed health care services in remote and northern communities. To date, 63 health care professionals have volunteered and 19 were deployed during the spring. This call to action will continue this fall to meet the potential increased demand for services.

The provincial government is working closely with health care professionals, organizations and unions to share and gather information. These groups are included in updates for the health sector on H1N1 along with RHA senior executives, key government staff and the incident command team to listen to concerns and share information about the response to the pandemic. A tripartite table that includes organized labour and RHAs is another forum to discuss and resolve issues. This important liaison work will continue and be expanded this fall.

In addition, the province will strengthen primary care services and continue to provide the most up-to-date scientific advice through guidelines and protocols for health care professionals.

---

## Working for Manitobans

More than \$3.1 million to support a robust health response and provide laboratory testing equipment, additional public health staff and to keep Manitobans informed about H1N1 flu.

Through an incident command system led by the Deputy Minister of Health and Healthy Living, staff work daily to assess, address and respond to emerging issues related to H1N1. This structure connects to RHAs, the federal government, First Nations and Metis governments, and other organizations to gather information, solve problems and provide direction. It provides the flexibility to adapt quickly to any new situations. The RHAs and Health Canada are preparing to deliver vaccine and health care services, and through the incident command system the province is able to react quickly to emerging issues.

### Sharing Information

Public information about the H1N1 flu and what Manitobans can do to combat the flu will continue to be shared. This fall, a H1N1 household guide will be provided to Manitobans and there will be ongoing public information campaigns, H1N1 bulletins and targeted information provided to specific stakeholders. The most up-to-date information can be found at the flu website at [www.manitoba.ca](http://www.manitoba.ca)

### What Every Manitoban Can Do

- Have a home flu kit with a thermometer; facial tissues, soap, ibuprofen or acetaminophen – do not give ASA to children.
- Be familiar with flu symptoms and what steps you should take - check the H1N1 household guide in the mail in September.
- Have someone who can help you out if you become ill and be ready to help out others who might need some support when they're not feeling well. This would include plans for caring for children, picking up groceries or other daily tasks.

---

## Keeping Manitoba Moving

From preparing a flu kit for home to planning for potential illness in the workplace, all Manitobans can prepare for a second wave of H1N1 flu.

Manitoba Health and Healthy Living and Manitoba's Emergency Measures Organization (EMO), are working with municipalities and First Nations and Metis organizations to ensure critical services that protect people, property and the environment such as emergency services, water, waste and garbage collection continue. Pandemic planning guidelines have been developed for businesses, schools, child care centres and municipalities and can be found at the flu website at [www.manitoba.ca](http://www.manitoba.ca). It is recommended that pandemic plans should be in place or in development for most Manitoba businesses to address possible issues such as higher-than-usual employee absenteeism, transportation problems or disruptions in receiving needed supplies.

Manitoba government departments have each developed business continuity plans to ensure that the government can continue to provide vital services during a pandemic influenza outbreak. Departments are also working with their key partners and organizations to expand the level of preparedness across the province. Departments are also sharing information about H1N1 through their contacts.

Schools are encouraged to include infection prevention and control as part of daily classroom life, including putting information about cough etiquette and hand washing throughout schools and ensuring hand hygiene supplies, such as soap and water, are readily available. Children who are feeling well do not need to stay home. Children and staff who are ill should stay home until they feel better and have no flu-like symptoms.

Parents/guardians are encouraged to have back-up plans for child care. Child care plans should consider:

- child care arrangements if your child is sick and unable to attend school;
- child care arrangements if a parent/guardian is sick and requires support after school-hours, including a designated person(s) to pick up children if you are unavailable.

Manitoba is ready to continue vigilantly responding to the H1N1 flu this fall. For the most up-to-date information on the flu, visit the flu website at [www.manitoba.ca](http://www.manitoba.ca)





