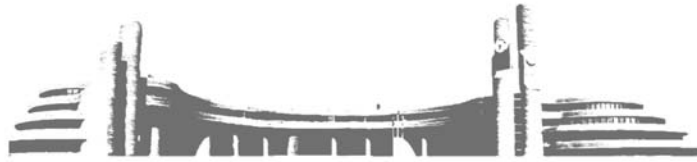


Tuesday, November 3, 2009

For Immediate Release



York Region opens its first Community Flu Assessment Centre

City of Vaughan centre will help assess patients experiencing influenza-like illness; reduce impact on local hospitals, physicians and the community

NEWMARKET – The Regional Municipality of York will open its first Community Flu Assessment Centre (CFAC) today, located at 9401 Jane Street in the City of Vaughan.

Included in York Region’s public health pandemic plan are Community Flu Assessment Centres, used during a pandemic influenza outbreak to alleviate pressures and congestion from local hospitals. The CFAC also provides residents who are suffering from influenza with another option for assessment and treatment.

“Opening a Community Flu Assessment Centre expands the Region’s response to H1N1 and allows emergency rooms to focus on treating people who are critically ill or have life-threatening illnesses or injuries,” said Dr. Karim Kurji, York Region’s Medical Officer of Health. “This enables us to bring a variety of health workers together to assist people in the community who are not able to manage their flu symptoms at home.”

Who should attend a community flu assessment centre?

Most people who get the flu will be able to manage their symptoms at home, but some people may need further assessment by a health care provider. Symptoms of the flu include the acute onset of fever (over 100 degrees Fahrenheit or 38 degrees Celsius) and a cough combined with a sore throat, muscle aches and/or joint pain and weakness.

If you have concerns about symptoms, you should contact your family physician or call **Telehealth Ontario at 1-866-797-0000, available 24 hours a day, seven days a week**. Residents who do not have a family doctor or are unable to get an appointment can attend the Community Flu Assessment Centre at the location and hours listed below.

Location	Dates and Times
9401 Jane Street City of Vaughan	Seven days a week opening Tuesday, November 3rd Monday to Thursday 1 p.m. to 7 p.m. Friday 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Saturday and Sunday 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.

A CFAC evaluates the needs of each individual and triages influenza patients. Patients are seen on a first come, first serve basis and are assessed by a registered nurse experienced in acute care. Patients who require immediate medical care will be fast-tracked. The Centre will be managed by on-site York Region public health staff.

Individuals who are identified as ill at this location may:

- Be sent home with education on self-care
- Receive anti-viral (either medication or prescription)
- Be transported to an alternate care facility (Emergency or Hospital Flu Assessment Centre)
- Be referred to family physicians in the community who have agreed to see referrals from the centre; this may include family physicians and/or urgent care physicians at the Urgent Care Facility located at the Vaughan location

The CFAC in the City of Vaughan is a unique model as it is located within the MD Urgent Health Care Centre. The hours of operation of the Community Flu Assessment Centre are coordinated with the hours of the health care centre, ensuring those that are assessed at the clinic will have access to the immediate care they may need.

“Prevention through the mass H1N1 flu virus immunization program already underway in York Region, combined with the opening of this CFAC assessment and treatment centre, succeeds in meeting our commitment to reducing the impact of flu in our community,” added Dr. Kurji.

Two additional Community Flu Assessment Centres are in development to help assist people across the Region, including one additional centre in southern York Region and another in the northern portion of the Region.

York Region Community Flu Assessment Centres will not offer the H1N1 flu vaccination. There are five H1N1 immunization clinics located across York Region. Some groups of people are at higher risk of contracting H1N1, developing complications from H1N1 or passing the flu to other higher-risk people. For this reason the H1N1 vaccine is currently only available to these groups.

Updated clinic information is available at www.york.ca/H1N1

For updated information on this year's flu season, please visit www.york.ca/H1N1 or contact York Region Health Connection at 1-800-361-5653.

Due to the sensitive nature of this assessment centre, members of the media will not be allowed to enter while on assignment. Filming within the facility is also prohibited.

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*Media Contact: Jennifer Mitchell-Emmerson, Community and Health Services, York Region
Phone: 905 830-4444, ext. 4016 or After-hours Cell: 905 716-9753
Email: jennifer.mitchellemmerson@york.ca*

*Patrick Casey, Director, Corporate Communications, York Region
Phone: 905 830-4444, ext. 1235 or Cell: 905 715-8211
Email: patrick.casey@york.ca*