



Sudbury & District

**Health Unit**

**Service de  
santé publique**

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February 25, 2005

*Via Electronic Mail*

The Honourable George Smitherman  
Minister of Health and Long-Term Care  
80 Grosvenor Street  
10th Floor, Hepburn Block  
Toronto, ON M7A 2C4

Dear Minister:

**RE: Advocacy for Provincial Health Care Worker Influenza  
Immunization Legislation**

Please be advised that at its February 17, 2005 meeting, the Sudbury & District Board of Health reviewed the Haliburton, Kawartha, Pine Ridge Board of Health motion on the above-noted matter and passed the following motion:

***WHEREAS the National Advisory Committee on Immunization (NACI 2004<sup>1</sup>) recommends “People who are capable of transmitting influenza to those at high risk should receive annual vaccination, regardless of whether the high-risk person(s) has been immunized. These individuals include the following: health care providers who work in facilities and community settings, such as physicians, nurses and emergency workers;” and***

***WHEREAS NACI 2004 further states that, “HCWs and their employers have a duty to actively promote, implement, and comply with influenza immunization recommendations in order to decrease the risk of infection and complications in the vulnerable populations for which they care;” and***

***WHEREAS it is estimated that every year up to 1,500 Canadians, mostly seniors, die from influenza-related pneumonia and many others die from other influenza related complications such as an aggravation of underlying chronic heart and lung disease; and***

***WHEREAS influenza vaccination is recognized as the single most effective way of preventing or attenuating influenza for those at high risk of serious illness or death from influenza infection and related complications; and***

***WHEREAS local Sudbury and District statistics confirm the findings of Canadian studies of health care workers in hospitals and long term care homes that have shown vaccination rates of only 26% to 61%; and***

**WHEREAS the Medical Officer of Health has recently approved a policy that will require all Sudbury & District Health Unit staff to receive annual influenza vaccination in order to protect the personal health of**

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**employees, volunteers, and students; ensure workplace safety; protect the integrity of public health staffing at times when health units may face increased demands to control illness in the community; and enhance the health unit's credibility in making recommendations for immunization to others;**

***THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Sudbury & District Board of Health endorses the motion of the Haliburton, Kawartha, Pine Ridge Board of Health and advocates to the Minister of Health and Long Term for provincial legislation requiring mandatory annual vaccination against influenza for all Ontario health care providers; and***

***THAT this motion be forwarded to all Ontario Boards of Health, the Chief Medical Officer of Health, local members of provincial parliament and all Sudbury and District public health care institutions for their information and endorsement.***

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***1 National Advisory Committee on Immunization (NACI). Statement on influenza immunization for the 2004-2005 season. 15 June 2004 30(3)***

As you may be aware from recent media coverage, health officials are raising the alarm about worsening influenza seasons ahead and even about pandemic influenza. Now more than ever, being clear about the immunization expectations of health care workers for their and their patients' health, is of critical importance.

Thank you for your attention to this important matter. We would be happy to consult on this further, should you consider that helpful.

Yours sincerely,

*Original signed by*

Penny Sutcliffe, MD, MHSc, FRCPC  
Medical Officer of Health and Chief Executive Officer

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c: Dr. S. Basrur, Chief Medical Officer of Health and Assistant Deputy Minister  
R. Bartolucci, Sudbury MPP  
M. Brown, Algoma-Manitoulin MPP  
S. Martel, Nickel Belt, MPP  
**Ontario Boards of Health**  
Sudbury and District Public Health Care Institutions