

## Communications Office

Peterborough County-City Health Unit  
10 Hospital Drive  
Peterborough, ON K9J 8M1  
(705) 743-1000, ext. 391  
[www.pcchu.ca](http://www.pcchu.ca)



## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### **Medical Officer of Health Asks Employers to Suspend Sick Note Policies Until H1N1 Activity Subsides**

#### ***Physicians Needed to Assess and Treat Growing Number of Patients with Influenza***

**Wednesday, October 21, 2009, Peterborough**

To enable physicians to assess and treat the growing numbers of patients with influenza, Dr. Rosana Pellizzari, Medical Officer of Health for the Peterborough County-City Health Unit (PCCHU) is asking local employers to consider suspending their sick note policies.

“Our community is experiencing an increase in the rates of respiratory and influenza-like illness due to the H1N1 virus. It is imperative that we protect the capacity of our physicians and primary care workers to respond to the assessment and treatment of patients with influenza,” said Dr. Pellizzari. “That is why I’ve asked local employers to review their absenteeism policies and suspend the requirement that employees present a sick note from doctors for absences unless absolutely necessary.”

In her memo, Dr. Pellizzari explained that waves of influenza typically last from six to eight weeks, and that it appears that our region is now at the beginning of a second wave for H1N1. She advised that employers suspend their sick note policies until the end of November, to be reviewed again at that time.

Employees who are sick with influenza-like symptoms should stay home from work until the fever has been absent for 24 hours and the person is feeling well enough to resume normal activities. It is not unusual for individuals to experience a cough for days to weeks after a respiratory infection. The presence of a cough in the absence of other symptoms is not sufficient to keep someone away from work.

Employees working in the health care sector who provide direct patient care should remain off work until 24 hours after all symptoms other than a mild cough have resolved, typically a period of five to eight days from the onset of symptoms. However, healthcare providers who have been treated with oseltamivir (Tamiflu®) for 72 hours will not be as infectious and may return

## **Communications Office**

Peterborough County-City Health Unit  
10 Hospital Drive  
Peterborough, ON K9J 8M1  
(705) 743-1000, ext. 391  
[www.pcchu.ca](http://www.pcchu.ca)



to work if they feel generally well except for a mild cough. Health care workers should consult with their Occupational Health departments, if applicable, for a “return to work” assessment.

For further information about H1N1 and upcoming vaccination clinics, please visit the PCCHU website at [www.pcchu.ca](http://www.pcchu.ca) or call (705) 743-1000.

-30-

### **For more information, please contact:**

Brittany Cadence  
Communications Officer  
Peterborough County-City Health Unit  
(705) 743-1000, ext. 391