



## Local Planning for Pandemic Influenza in Perth County, Ontario

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Dec 2, 2004  
Montreal, Quebec

## Pandemic Planning In Ontario

- provincial workshop held in 1999 to raise awareness and launch planning process
- Ontario health units asked to develop local pandemic plans; templates created in 2001
- no work on provincial pandemic plan until after SARS
- provincial health pandemic plan published May 2004



## **Perth County Planning Process**

- a long and slow process with still no written pandemic plan

### ***However:***

- high awareness of issue
- much thinking and planning has occurred
- several real emergencies provided practice
- better vision now of what plan should look like



## **Local Launch – August 2000**

- workshop for key stakeholders in Perth and Huron Counties (health, municipal, social services etc.)
- presentations on pandemic influenza, its impact, and pandemic planning
- creation of a two-county pandemic flu planning committee
- further work postponed until 2001 because of new universal influenza immunization program

## First Planning Committee

- joint Huron-Perth planning committee met several times in 2001 to identify tasks and local leadership
- decision to work separately except for hospital planning
- community preparedness workshop held Nov 2001 for municipalities, social services and voluntary agencies
- follow-up meetings with municipal CAO's in 2002 to clarify roles and decision-making

## Work Continues Slowly

- many presentations on pandemic influenza to health care providers & Boards, municipalities, community groups
- formal pandemic planning interrupted by WNV and SARS 
- new Ontario emergency preparedness legislation promoted renewed municipal interest by late 2003
- SARS experience prompted health planners to come together again 

## **“PEP for Health” Activities - 2004**

- Perth Emergency Preparedness for Healthcare formed in January 2004 to address health emergency planning
- reviewed FluAid and FluSurge projections for Perth County
- agreed to complete county pandemic plan
- held a successful county-wide workshop
- will help plan hospital pandemic exercise next spring

## **System Preparedness for a Major Epidemic - Is Perth County Ready? (October 1, 2004)**

- workshop goal to strengthen emergency planning linkages between community, municipal and health sectors
- high level speakers ensured strong turnout
- training exercise used avian flu scenario to clarify roles and responsibilities
- will become an annual event

## **What Our Pandemic Plan Will Look Like**

- decided on one overall county pandemic plan combining health and municipal roles
- will follow our provincial plan closely
- Incident Management approach to be adopted
- individual agencies and municipalities also need plans for parts they are responsible for
- components to be as generic as possible

## **Perth Pandemic Influenza Plan Draft Outline**

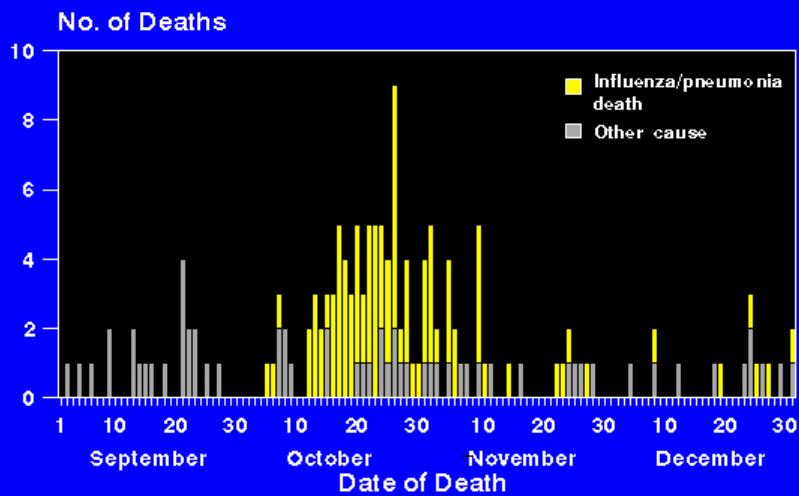
- introduction
- Perth County impact
- assumptions
- goal of the response
- response phases
- overview of roles and responsibilities
- organization of the Perth County response (command structure)

# Tools for Creating Interest

- local experience with pandemic influenza
- stories eg search for 1918 virus
- old photos
- projections of local impact (FluAid and FluSurge)

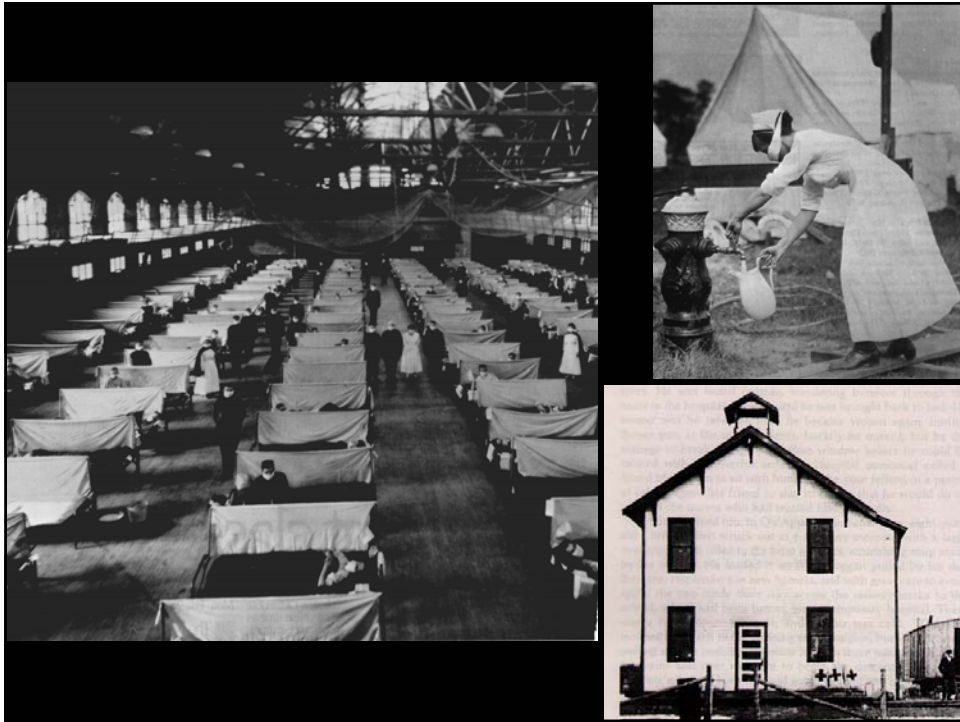


## Stratford Deaths During Spanish Flu Pandemic\* Fall 1918



\*burial records from Stratford Avondale Cemetery







## An Urgent Appeal to All Telephone Users

The Spanish Influenza has caused a very serious shortage in our operating force.

In order to insure prompt and efficient handling of important Government calls and calls to physicians, dealing with the epidemic, the public is requested:

- (1) To make only the most urgent and necessary calls.
- (2) To refrain, as far as possible, from special appeals to Managers, whose entire time should be given to the supervision of their central offices.
- (3) To show consideration of those operators who, despite their increased tasks necessitating overtime work, are loyally giving of their best endeavors.

This is a frank statement of the conditions. We are confident that only a word to the public in such a situation is necessary.

**The Bell Telephone Company of Canada**





ONTARIO EMERGENCY VOLUNTEER  
HEALTH AUXILIARY

# WANTED—VOLUNTEERS!!

The Provincial Board of Health, with the authority of the Government of Ontario, has organized an "Ontario Emergency Volunteer Health Auxiliary" for the purpose of training and supplying nursing help to be utilized wherever needed in combating the Influenza outbreak. A strong Executive has been formed in Toronto. It is recommended that each Municipal Council and Local Board of Health, working in co-operation, take immediate steps to form a local branch of this organization. The Volunteer Nurses will wear the officially authorized badge, "Ontario S.O.S." (Sisters of Service). This "S.O.S." call may be urgent. Classes taking lectures are already opened in the Parliament Buildings, Toronto (Private Bills Committee Room, ground floor), where they will be carried on every day at 10 a.m. and 3 p.m. until further notice. Young women of education are urged to avail themselves of this unique opportunity to be of real service to the community. If they are not needed, so much the better. If they are needed, we hope to have them ready. All towns and cities are urged to organize and prepare in a similar manner.

A Syllabus of Lectures is being sent to the Medical Officer of Health of all cities and towns. Further information may be had on application to John W. S. McCullough, M.D., Chairman of Executive, Parliament Buildings, Toronto, Telephone Main 5800.

C. S. NEWTON, Sec.-Treas.

W. D. McPHERSON, President.

J. W. S. McCULLOUGH, Chairman of Executive Committee.

## Assessing Local Impact in Perth County (pop 74,000)

*Assumptions: no vaccine or antivirals  
35% attack rate*

|                   | most likely | range           |
|-------------------|-------------|-----------------|
| outpatient visits | 13,811      | 10,840 - 19,635 |
| hospitalizations  | 364         | 151 - 482       |
| deaths            | 74          | 45 - 121        |

Source: FluAid and FluSurge

## Percent of Hospital Capacity Used by Flu Patients, Perth County

*Assumptions: no. vaccine or antivirals  
35% attack rate, 6 week wave*

### *Most likely scenario*

| Beds needed for:      | existing capacity | needed in 4 <sup>th</sup> wk | % of capacity used |
|-----------------------|-------------------|------------------------------|--------------------|
| hospital admissions   | 223               | 80                           | 36%                |
| flu pts in ICU        | 9                 | 17                           | 187%               |
| flu pts on ventilator | 5                 | 8                            | 168%               |

Source: FluSurge  
[www.cdc.gov/flu/flusurge.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/flu/flusurge.htm)

## Pandemic Exercises

- few examples of local exercises
- can incorporate into required municipal or agency exercises
- seize or create opportunities, for example:
  - small outbreaks or emergencies
  - scheduled events like mass vaccination campaigns
  - pilot components during regular flu seasons

## **Key Challenges**

- lack of provincial plan until spring 2004
- lack of time and resources for planning
- municipal complacency about their role
- trying to integrate Incident Management approach
- lack of models for local plans and local exercises

## **Key Success Factors**

- local champion(s)
- using local stories and projections
- adapting framework of provincial and national plans
- health sector collaboration
- linkage with emergency response sector
- creating opportunities to practice components of the plan

*‘There is only one thing more difficult than planning for an emergency, and that would be having to explain why you didn’t.’*

*Dr Bonnie Henry*

