

To: ALL STAFF **Date:** April 22, 2009

From: Peter F. Dundas **Subject:** Severe Respiratory Illness in South
Director and Central Mexico

cc: Iris Ukrainyc

Today we received a notice from the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care (MOHLTC), that a number of cases of severe respiratory illness (SRI) have been reported in various locations in south and central Mexico. A number of otherwise healthy patients between the ages of 25-44 have exhibited influenza-like symptoms that have progressed to severe respiratory distress in five days. There have been some deaths in this group. Also some health care workers have been affected in Mexico.

Some specimens have tested positive for influenza A and B viruses; however it is not clear at this stage whether these cases represent isolated events or whether they are linked. Furthermore, there is no evidence at present to suggest infection with an unusual pathogen, including a novel strain or influenza.

The MOHLTC is focussing their initial activities on reminders to use Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) diligently. Also, they are increasing surveillance and testing of cases involving severe respiratory symptoms, particularly those patients who have been in Mexico within the last two weeks.

With this information we have been in contact with the CACC and they will be screening all patients for SRI with particular focus on their travel to Mexico in the past 14 days.

CACC will be screening all calls originating from Pearson Airport to identify if the airplane has been in Mexico prior to its travel to Pearson. Upon confirmation that the plane has been in Mexico and that a patient(s) meets the screening criteria for SRI it will be mandatory for responding crews to wear full PPE for droplet precautions – gloves, N95 mask, protective eyewear and isolation gown.

Tonight, Support Services will ensure that adequate quantities of PPE including filters for the BVM and high flow masks (Flo2Max) with filters are available for your use. The Flo2Max is only to be used in conjunction with full PPE for those patients who exhibit symptoms of SRI and/or have traveled to Mexico in the past two weeks.

Upon the completion of your call of a suspected SRI please contact your on-duty District Supervisor.

We would like to remind all staff who contact patients to be diligent in the use of PPE, especially hand washing, as a part of your normal activities. Please include questioning in your history taking about recent trips to Mexico and notify hospital staff of your findings.

As we are made aware of any changes in the current situation in Mexico we will keep you informed.

