

July 8, 2009

Infection Prevention and Control measures in place at Alberta Children's Hospital

CALGARY – Alberta Health Services (AHS) advises the public that high level infection prevention and control measures in place at the Alberta Children's Hospital provide a high level of protection against the potential spread of the H1N1 virus, which is contained to one unit of the hospital. The main hospital, clinic areas and the emergency department are open and operating normally.

“The H1N1 virus is not an airborne disease so parents and visitors to the hospital should not be concerned about the virus circulating to other areas of the hospital via air ventilation systems,” said Dr. Richard Musto, Medical Officer of Health for the Calgary and area zone. “The infection prevention and control measures we have rolled out since the weekend are the best defense against limiting the spread of this illness to others at the ACH. On July 8, 2009, the number of confirmed H1N1 cases remains the same – two patients and one staff member.”

The Alberta Children's Hospital is the newest facility of its kind in Canada and was built with state-of-the-art air ventilation systems that, if required, can exchange air completely within each patient room in 8.5 minutes.

Yesterday, Alberta Health Services released the fact that a small cluster of H1N1 cases involving two patients and a staff member were confirmed by lab testing on Monday, July 6. The patients were immediately isolated in their private rooms on the weekend when they became symptomatic. The staff member remained at home upon becoming ill.

The unit at the hospital was immediately closed to new patient admissions and all common areas – such as the family room, play room and nutrition centre – were also closed. Deep cleaning and other infection and prevention control measures were also immediately instituted. These measures are standard protocol when any infectious disease cluster occurs within an AHS hospital environment.

Alberta Health Services reminds everyone of the importance of practicing proper personal hygiene in order to limit the spread of illness. Always wash your hands frequently; cover your coughs and sneezes with your arm, not your hand; and if using a tissue throw it in the garbage and clean your hands afterwards. Hand hygiene stations are available throughout the hospital.

If you have influenza-like illness, including fever, cough and other respiratory symptoms, please stay home. For more information on H1N1, call Health Link Alberta at 1-866-408-LINK (5465) or visit <http://www.health.alberta.ca/documents/Influenza-Self-Care.pdf> for self-care information.

- 30 -

For media inquiries, please contact:

Don Stewart
AHS Media Relations
403.943.1210