

September 2, 2009

## Additional ventilators purchased for H1N1 preparedness

Pandemic (H1N1) 2009 continues to circulate and as fall flu season approaches, it is highly likely that an escalation in the number of serious cases will occur in Alberta and across Canada.

As part of ongoing pandemic preparedness and to ensure the provision of services to meet priority health needs during a time of potential high demand, Alberta Health Services (AHS) recently purchased 106 additional ventilator units. These machines will be used in the treatment of individuals who may develop serious respiratory conditions and require assistance breathing.

“This purchase is based on a comprehensive review of recent experiences both in the southern hemisphere and here in Canada. It will enable deployment of ventilators to areas of need across the province during a pandemic,” said Dr. Stephen Duckett, President and Chief Executive Officer, Alberta Health Services. “Through our improved procurement process, AHS was able to realize almost \$2 million in savings on this \$3.9 million purchase. These funds came from already established project equipment budgets.”

Delivery will commence in mid-September with final units currently scheduled for arrival in mid-October. Should further need arise, Alberta Health and Wellness will also act to secure ventilators from a national federal stockpile administered by the Public Health Agency of Canada.

Alberta Health Services reminds all citizens of the important need to continue to practice basic precautions to reduce the spread of the virus; specifically washing one’s hands frequently and staying home when sick. This is key in preventing the spread of any virus or infection, including H1N1.

Vaccination is also a critical component in protecting people against the pandemic. An H1N1 vaccine is currently going through clinical trials and AHS anticipates vaccine delivery from Alberta Health and Wellness in November.

Details on vaccination clinics will be announced as soon as vaccine is available for delivery to Albertans. These clinics will provide a safe, accessible and established environment for the public to receive their immunizations.

Alberta Health Services is the provincial health authority responsible for planning and delivering health supports and services for more than 3.5 million adults and children living in Alberta. Its mission is to provide a patient-focused, quality health system that is accessible and sustainable for all Albertans.

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