

News Release

Nunavut Part of National Pandemic Preparedness Effort

IQALUIT, Nunavut (May 18, 2006) – Leona Aglukkaq, Minister of Health and Social Services, has committed the Government of Nunavut to a Canada-wide effort to strengthen public health capacity in preparing for public health threats, including pandemic influenza.

"Nunavut is determined to be ready for the next pandemic," said Aglukkaq. "We are well underway in the process of updating our Pandemic Influenza Plan. Working together with community, territorial, provincial and federal governments enhances our ability to protect the public health of Nunavummiut."

Aglukkaq met with federal, provincial and territorial Ministers of Health in Toronto on May 13 to review the extensive work already underway by all governments. Ministers reaffirmed their leadership in preparing for and responding to a pandemic. They also agreed to work together on a number of activities to enhance preparedness such as:

- Increasing the National Antiviral Stockpile,
- Ensuring Canadians have the information they need to prepare for and respond to a pandemic,
- Promoting collaboration between the health, environment and agricultural sectors in response to the risk posed by avian influenza (bird flu), and
- Undertaking planning exercises to ensure a state of readiness.

"Nunavummiut should know that the government is working on a number of fronts to ensure that public health is protected from influenza, whether it is 'regular flu,' bird flu or a flu that becomes pandemic in scope," Aglukkaq said. "But we should each remember to do our part by washing our hands with soap frequently -- to prevent the spread of any infectious illness -- and to get an annual flu shot against the 'regular' flu."

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