

Discovery Process of First Nations' Pandemic Planning Efforts

Over the course of updating its pandemic influenza preparedness plan (PIPP) through 2007-2008, Interior Health (IH) identified a number of areas where its guidelines required linkages with previously developed First Nations' (FN) community plans, provincial strategies, and/or federal FN pandemic protocols. As a result, IH and its Infectious Hazards Emergency Response Planning Task Force (TF) determined that ongoing pandemic work in 2008-2009 would include a "discovery" process to liaise with internal and external stakeholders responsible for FN pandemic influenza plans.

This process would identify resources already developed and implemented, and address key gaps in preparedness between IH and its FN communities. The consultants on record for IH, Global Consulting, linked with a variety of FN stakeholders to investigate the status of planning at the local/community, health authority, provincial, and federal levels. Following from a review of FN and IH pandemic planning documents, including discussions with federal, provincial, local, and First Nations partners, four key areas for further stakeholder discussion and collaboration regarding FN pandemic planning were identified, including:

- i. Mass Vaccination and Rural/Remote Geographic Considerations:*
 - a. How and when will mass vaccination occur for FN communities?
 - b. What will be the roles and responsibilities of each organization involved?
 - c. How will remote FN communities access the pandemic vaccine?
- ii. Distribution of Antivirals:*
 - a. When available, how will antivirals be accessed by FN communities?
 - b. What will be the roles and responsibilities of each organization involved?
 - c. How will remote FN communities access antivirals?
- iii. Declaring Death:*
 - a. Who can declare death for FN communities?
 - b. How will these resources be shared during a pandemic?
 - c. What will occur if death declarations cannot immediately be made?
- iv. Health Resources for FN Communities:*
 - a. What will be the process for backfill if designated FN health resources (i.e., nurses, health teams, etc.) are not available?

It is recommended that future planning and collaboration between all stakeholders, particularly FN communities and IH, work to develop progress in these areas as supported by on-going planning efforts from all partners, especially those at the provincial and federal levels.