

# **Pandemic Influenza:**

## **Social Implications for Children & Youth**

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# Unique Considerations

- ***Children are at greater risk of infection & complications from influenza***
  - Significant impact on young children
  - Prolonged viral shedding
  - Challenge for parents & providers to recognize non-specific symptoms
  - Heightened anxiety for parent/ caregiver as to how, when, where to access care for child
  - Children require more “hands-on” care & need for continuous adult presence/ supervision



# Unique Considerations

- ***Public health authorities are likely to consider “social distancing” measures such as closing schools & day cares to prevent spread***
  - Increased pressure on working parents/caregivers who may be ill themselves or caring for ill family members
  - Particular stress on health care & other essential service workforce capacity
  - Communal gatherings may shift to other settings undermining public health measures
  - Impedes learning & education
  - Ripple effect on “normal” family function & quality of life



# Unique Considerations

- ***Parents and other adults play a key role in caring for children at home and in paediatric settings***
  - Parents/caregivers may be too ill themselves to provide care for their children
  - Hospitalization will separate child & parent/ caregiver
  - Surge capacity will be particularly challenging
  - Additional burden for health care & other essential service workers who must balance “duty to service” & “duty to family”



# Strategies

## **When planning have you thought about...**

- Direct & indirect social impact of a pandemic & our response
- Effective communication with children, youth & families
- Support for personal & professional preparedness
- Strategies to enhance “*Social Surge Capacity*”
- Efforts to help children & youth maintain a “normal life” during & after a pandemic

*“Food for Thought...  
Incentive for Action”*



**Panel Presentation:**

Lindy Samson, Anne Matlow, Danuta Skowronski,  
Sandra Rafman & Cindy Bruce-Barrett

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# We all need to think about...

- **How** our institutions can most effectively prepare for an influenza pandemic?
- **How** we can create surge capacity to care for children & youth in the event of a large scale pandemic?
- **How** we can create & share best practices for children/youth pandemic planning?



# We all need to think about...

- **How** we can develop integrated paediatric/youth pandemic planning involving co-ordination between specific centers, regional, provincial & national organizations & governments?
- **How** we can advocate for child & youth pandemic planning at a local, provincial and national level?



# Reflections on Planning

*“Bite off more than you can chew, then chew it. Plan more than you can do, then do it.”*

Anonymous



# Proposed Recommendations

1. A national advisory council for paediatric/youth pandemic planning should be established to provide leadership & advocacy ensuring implementation of a comprehensive, coordinated plan for children & youth locally, provincially & nationally.
2. The national advisory council would facilitate the development of tools & structures in order to foster ongoing sharing of paediatric/ youth pandemic planning information & best practice.

