

## EDUCATION BULLETIN INFLUENZA A (H1N1) VIRUS

**TO:** School boards, CEGEPs, universities and private teaching institutions

**DATE:** January 12, 2010

**SUBJECT:** End of the second wave of Influenza A (H1N1) in Québec

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On January 7, 2010, the Québec Director of Public Health announced the end of the second wave of Influenza A (H1N1) in the province.

### **Applying preventive measures**

Educational institutions may therefore stop implementing the specific preventive measures established since the start of the second wave and go back to applying the usual measures, particularly those concerning the maintenance of school premises and equipment.

However, educational institutions and school organizations are urged to have their staff and students continue with the various health protection measures that have been established, such as hand washing and respiratory etiquette. These measures are also effective in curtailing the spread of the seasonal flu virus and other illnesses.

### **Monitoring absenteeism**

Monitoring absenteeism for flu-like symptoms can also stop.

Educational institutions and school organizations are no longer required to transmit their data on absenteeism through the MELS Internet application. If the situation were to change, however, this mechanism could be reinstituted under the same terms and conditions.

The MELS regional office should be contacted immediately in the event of a high rate of absenteeism due to flu-like symptoms.

### **Managing absenteeism**

As of now, the usual rules governing the management of illness-related absences apply, in accordance with the collective agreement in effect.

### **Preventive leave for pregnant workers**

With the end of the second wave in Québec, the province's Director of Public Health has lifted the recommendation that pregnant employees in Québec schools be granted preventive leave and reassignment to protect them against the risks associated with the Influenza A (H1N1) virus, a recommendation that was made in accordance with the CSST's "Safe Working Conditions for a Safe Maternity Experience" program.

The CSST is currently studying the impact the lifting of this recommendation will have on pregnant school system employees who are currently on preventive leave because of this particular risk. The CSST will determine the terms and conditions that apply as these employees return to work.

You will be informed of these transitional measures as soon as they have been determined.

For newly pregnant school system employees who wish to take advantage of the "Safe Working Conditions for a Safe Maternity Experience" program, the usual process applies.

### **Taking stock and applying what is learned**

The end of intense mobilization efforts such as those expended to deal with the second wave of Influenza A (H1N1) is an opportune time to take stock of the measures that were instituted, in order to determine which were most successful and which need to be improved. The findings of this analysis should be taken into consideration when planning for emergency situations for each educational institution and school organization.

### **Acknowledgments**

Finally, the Ministère de l'Éducation, du Loisir et du Sport would like to take this opportunity to thank the educational institutions and school organizations for their excellent collaboration in managing this situation, particularly in regard to the monitoring of absenteeism and the organization of student vaccination.

For all other questions associated with Influenza A (H1N1), please contact your MELS regional office.