

TOWNSHIP OF O'CONNOR – NOTES –
EMERGENCY TABLETOP PANDEMIC EXERCISE OCTOBER 5, 2009

Notes of the tabletop pandemic exercise held on October 5, 2009 in the municipal building.

Present: Mayor Nelson
Councillors: Garbutt, Racicot, Vezina
Clerk-Treasurer Buob
Deputy Clerk-Treasurer Racicot
John Coupland, EMO
Fire Chief Henry Mattas, Fire Department and First Response members – Ian Hamilton, Mike Styles, David Wassenaar, Greg Biloski, Brendan Byers, Aaron Rutland, Stefan Derech, Randy Turk
Road Department – Kelly Johnson, Brent Dennhardt,
O'Connor Community Club – Ronda Martin
Ontario Provincial Police – Todd Smith and Doug Golding
Thunder Bay District Health Unit, Infectious Disease – Diane Hunley and Sharon Curellu,
Canadian Red Cross – Rachel Coros
Thunder Bay DSSAB – Mary Lucas

Mayor Nelson welcomed everyone to the Pandemic exercise and introductions were made around the table. He then turned the exercise over to Mr. Coupland from Emergency Measures Organization. Mr. Coupland explained that this was both an educational session and an exercise.

Mr. Coupland informed everyone that an annex for the emergency plan will be coming in the fall for the pandemic for the six municipalities around the Thunder Bay hospital. Assessment centres may be setup for assessing patients if the hospital is busy, to see who should attend the hospital.

Mr. Coupland explained that tonight's exercise is a six-part exercise that the group will go through, but first he turned the meeting over to Ms. Hunley and Ms. Curellu from the Thunder Bay District Health Unit, Infectious Disease department to discuss the Influenza Pandemic. Information with regard to the pandemic was discussed. What it is, what the symptoms are, how long it lasts, who it affects and who are most at risk, where it started, how it will be treated.

They also reported that there has been eleven cases reported in the Thunder Bay area since April. The Thunder Bay area covers the area from Upsala to Manitouwadge, Longlac and James Bay. Only the major cases are being tested. They are not testing minor symptoms, as the lab could not possibly keep up to them all.

The H1N1 was declared a global pandemic by the World Health Association because it fit the criteria to declare, because it was world wide and there were a lot of deaths in Mexico when it first came out.

The vaccines for the H1N1 are coming and will be given to people with chronic illness, children 5 months to 6 years of age and health care workers. The seasonal flu shots will also be given. The first round will roll out after Thanksgiving for those 65 and over and residents in long term care facilities, then the H1N1 vaccines will be given and then the remainder of the flu shots will be out in December and January.

A question was asked with regard to the news media announcing that if you had the flu shot last year you are more susceptible to get the H1N1 this year. There has been no field study done on this yet and it is still being reviewed.

Antiviral will be free to those who need it but only for those who are really ill. It will not be prophylactic.

It is recommended that if you are sick stay home. If serious symptoms such as shortness of breath etc. go to the hospital, if not cope at home.

Preventative measures were discussed. You should wash your hands regularly, cough into your sleeve, use tissues, get the vaccine, use hand sanitizers, clean your

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environment around your work stations regularly, light switches, etc. Regular detergents will work to kill the germs. You should read the manufactures directions with regard to the required contact times. It was noted that hand sanitizers should have a minimum of 60% alcohol in them to be effective.

There currently is no intention to close the schools, arenas, auditoriums or other public places. The only reason a school would be closed if too many staff would be absent not for the H1N1.

The immunization will only be given by physicians and health unit staff.

The meeting was then turned over to Ms. Coros to discuss what the Red Cross will do as a part of the disaster team. They would work with the Fire Department. They could help with evacuations, depending on the number of volunteers they help with delivery of groceries and medicine. During SARS the volunteers would ring the doorbell and back away. There was no interaction with the people.

Ms. Lucas from Thunder Bay DSSAB explained their roll in an emergency. They can provide shelter and basic needs, assistance cheques and vouchers for either goods or monetary. Their experience with the elderly and children and the different people in their homes is that they may not have technology to contact people by email or retrieve information from a website. She explained that the Province is good when it comes to emergencies and she doesn't see a problem with helping. The people needing help would just have to be identified to them.

The meeting was then turned back to Mr. Coupland. He explained that the exercise in front of everyone was drafted by the Emergency Management Ontario. The Pandemic Exercise for Amethyst Sector was read and questions for each part were discussed.

Information with regard to the Pandemic will be included in the Township's monthly newsletter, the Cornerstone, as well links to the Thunder Bay District Health Unit and TeleHealth will be put on the Township website for a quick refers for our viewers.

It was noted that there will be waves to the pandemic, the first one has gone through, and they are expecting to have the highest number of cases in Ontario in January.

Mr. Coupland thanked the ladies from the TBDHU, Red Cross and Thunder Bay DSSAB for attending and sharing their information. Mayor Nelson thanked everyone else for their volunteerism and for attending the exercise.

Mayor Nelson thanked everyone for coming and the meeting adjourned at 8:42 p.m.

Mayor

Clerk-Treasurer