

Health Unit Media Release

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FLU CENTRES CLOSING AS INFLUENZA ACTIVITY SLOWS DOWN

The Influenza (Flu) Assessment, Treatment and Referral Centres that were set up early in November have seen decreasing numbers for two weeks straight and will close as of Thursday Nov 19th, 2009. The centres were located at the Smiths Falls Community Health Centre on Gould Street and the North Lanark Community Health Centre. The flu centre at the Kemptville District Hospital Emergency Room closed on November 9th.

It was important to open these Centres in order to meet patient demands for influenza care in several locations. As part of the LGL Tri-County Pandemic Plan, flu centres would be prepared to open again if the need increased in the future.

“We are confident that flu centres served a need in the community at the time when influenza-like illness was at its peak,” says Peter McKenna, Executive Director of the Merrickville District Community Health and Services Centre.

“We are very fortunate here in Leeds, Grenville and Lanark as we have real time data concerning the number of emergency department visits and admissions to our local hospitals;” says Dr. Anne Carter, Medical Officer of Health for the Leeds, Grenville and Lanark District Health Unit. “This data was valuable in identifying the need to open flu assessment centres to take the pressure off local emergency departments before they became overwhelmed. It also helped us to recognize when the centres were no longer needed and could close.”

With the closing of these co-ordinated flu centres, residents are reminded to use the guide below in deciding when they need to seek medical attention and who to call:

- Call **Telehealth Ontario** (1-866-797-0000) if you or a family member is sick and you have questions.
- CALL your **Health Care Provider** if you have influenza-like symptoms and you are pregnant, have underlying medical conditions, are over 65 or under 5 years of age. You may need to book an appointment quickly to receive treatment.
- **Only go to the Emergency Department if your illness is severe or worsening;** such as having difficulty breathing, shortness of breath, chest pain, continuous vomiting or severe diarrhea with signs of dehydration, confusion, seizures, or extreme lack of energy.
- Visit the **Leeds, Grenville and Lanark District Health Unit website at www.healthunit.org** for up-to-date information about:
 - H1N1
 - Vaccine and immunization clinics
 - Symptoms and knowing what to do
 - Taking care of yourself and your family
- **Call the Health Unit** at 1-800-660-5853 if you have questions about seasonal and H1N1 vaccines.