TO: Halton Physicians  
Medical Chiefs of Staff: Joseph Brant Hospital, Halton Healthcare (Oakville, Milton and Georgetown Hospitals)  
Chairs of: Family Practice, Paediatrics, Internal Medicine, Emergency, Obstetrics and Gynaecology, Surgery  
Chief of Laboratory Services and Infection Control Practitioners  

POST IN: Emergency Department and Physicians Lounge  
FROM: Dr. Julie Emili, Associate Medical Officer of Health  
DATE: December 12, 2018  

RE: Increasing Pediatric Influenza Activity  

Halton is seeing a higher number of influenza cases among children than in past flu seasons. Approximately 1/3 of these children have been hospitalized. In the first week of December, 11 new pediatric cases (0-12 years of age) were reported in Halton. This trend is similar to that seen across Canada.  

Influenza A is the most common influenza virus circulating in Canada at this time. The percentage of tests positive for influenza A is higher for this time of year compared to the same period during the previous eight seasons. The majority of these viruses are A(H1N1)pdm09. The 2018/2019 influenza vaccine which contains the A(H1N1)pdm09 strain appears to be a good match. Early indications also show some influenza B/Phuket/3073/2013-like strains circulating and this strain is also included in the 2018/2019 quadrivalent influenza vaccine (QIV).  

Health care providers are encouraged to continue to promote influenza immunization for all age groups including children older than 6 months of age and pregnant woman. Please note that there is no longer any FluMist available in Ontario. Providers should continue to use QIV for all eligible individuals. Infants and children under 9 years of age who are receiving influenza vaccine for the first time should be receiving 2 doses at least 4 weeks apart.  

For weekly updates on influenza activity across Halton during influenza season, please sign up for our weekly influenza surveillance report:  
http://webaps.halton.ca/forms/mailchimp/influenza.cfm  

For more information on influenza activity across Canada, please see the FluWatch report from PHAC:  

Please report all suspected or confirmed cases of Diseases of Public Health Significance (formerly Reportable Diseases) to the Halton Region Health Department as soon as possible. Diseases marked * should be reported immediately by telephone (24 hours a day, 7 days a week) or fax (Mon-Fri, 8:30 am – 4:30 pm only). Other diseases can be reported the next working day. Call 311, 905-825-6000 or toll free at 1-866-442-5866. For general information, please visit halton.ca.  

If any link provided in this memo does not work, please cut and paste it into your web browser.