



# À PROPOS

DES CENTRES DE LA JEUNESSE ET DE LA FAMILLE BATSHAW

Bulletin du directeur général, Michael Udy

## *SPECIAL EDITION*

### **Influenza Pandemic: Batshaw Centres in action!**

*Batshaw Centres is getting ready for a potential influenza pandemic. Donald Foidart, Secretary General and Counselor to the Director General of the West Montreal Readaptation Centre, wrote a very interesting and relevant article on the subject. He was kind enough to permit us adapt it for the benefit of all Batshaw employees, and we thank him.*

*During the next weeks, we will keep you informed of our progress, and of any development.*

*I thank you for your constant cooperation.*

*Michael Udy  
Executive Director*

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For the past few months, the topic of an influenza pandemic (or bird flu) has regularly made headlines in the various medias. On March 9<sup>th</sup>, the Québec government announced its plan entitled “The Québec Pandemic Influenza Plan – Health Mission”. As a public establishment in the health and social service network, Batshaw Youth and Family Centres has been solicited to prepare its own emergency plan in conformity with the directives of the Ministry.

At this point in time, while people have caught bird flu from birds, there is absolutely no evidence of a flu pandemic transmitted from humans to humans anywhere around the world, but there is a risk that one could appear in the near or medium-term future. Nobody knows where or when an epidemic could surface, and nobody can predict the degree of severity of any such development. Nonetheless, the government of Québec, with its network of public health and social service establishments, is putting a plan in place and is preparing for such an eventuality, as are all other provincial governments in Canada.

As with all emergency plans, the “Québec Pandemic Influenza Plan – Health Mission” is a work in progress. It has five sectors: public health, physical health, psychosocial intervention, communications and maintenance of services. Public health establishments and the regional agencies already have emergency plans to respond to a catastrophe.

New regional and local plans related to this kind of epidemic were completed by the end of June. Thus, each public establishment, ours included, must produce a plan in line with its specific mission under the law. Such a plan will determine, before the appearance of a crisis situation, and after consultation with all parties, specific courses of action in the event of an epidemic of any nature and scope.

Experts around the world agree that a pandemic is more and more likely. Three out of four pre-conditions for an epidemic presently exist:

- The virus H5N1, active at this time, constitutes a new strain of virus;
- No vaccine exists to counteract it;
- To provoke an epidemic, the strain must be sufficiently virulent;
- Infection must be passable from human to human.

At this point, the fourth condition is absent. The virus seems to be transmitted solely from birds to humans and only under certain conditions.

The preliminary Batshaw Youth and Family Centres Emergency Plan Influenza Pandemic (EPIP) has been completed. In September, work will be done to complete it and ensure it can be implemented effectively in the case of a pandemic. In addition, a communication plan is being prepared to inform our staff, users, families, community organizations and service partners of normal preventive measures needed to be put in place as well as concrete measures that will be instituted in the event of an epidemic in Québec.

Work at each level of the Ministry, provincial, regional, local, and with the officials of Civil Security, is based upon coordinated, specific action plans. Everybody will be solicited to contribute to coping with the effects of an eventual epidemic.

Over the next few weeks and months, information will be presented via various sources (intranet, health and safety billboards, pay stub attachments, etc.) which will provide you with general information on the pandemic itself as well as explain the different elements of Batshaw’s EPIP. There will be opportunities provided for questions, suggestions and comments.