



FOR RELEASE  
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## **Whitehorse temporarily out of flu vaccine**

WHITEHORSE—Yukon's Chief Medical Officer of Health Dr. Brendan Hanley announced today that Whitehorse has no seasonal influenza vaccine left. The Whitehorse Health Centre flu clinics are closed until further notice.

"As predicted," Hanley said, "Whitehorse has run out of vaccine, if a little sooner than anticipated. This means that Yukoners have stepped forward to achieve an unprecedented rate of immunization against seasonal influenza. In turn we will see better protection for those who can't, won't or are unable to obtain vaccination for now."

Most community health centres are operating as usual. They have already sent Whitehorse all the doses they could spare.

Vaccine doses are ordered based on the number of people that attended vaccine clinics in previous years. The demand for immunization this year speaks to higher awareness among the population and the higher number of young and middle-aged adults being affected by the H1N1 strain. Normally those most vulnerable to seasonal influenza are the very young and the elderly.

Hanley acknowledges that this is an intense flu year so far. However, he does remind Yukoners that for the vast majority, influenza is a self-limited mild to moderate illness. "H1N1 is no more severe than other types of seasonal influenza. However, when lots of people are affected we do see individuals with more severe illness, especially those people with underlying chronic medical conditions.

"I understand that this is frustrating for those people who want to obtain their flu shot but can't," Hanley said. "We are working with Public Health Agency of Canada to obtain more doses, but so is every other jurisdiction in Canada. As soon as we have more doses available, we will inform the public."

In the meantime, people can take comfort in the relatively high rate of immunization in the community. Also, those who have received the flu shot any time since 2009 or who have had H1N1 influenza previously will be at least partially protected.

In the meantime, Hanley reminds Yukoners that they can protect themselves by using good health practices:

- Covering their mouths when they cough or sneeze, or coughing or sneezing into their elbow; and
- Washing their hands frequently.

He also recommends that Yukoners who get sick stay home to avoid spreading the illness.

Updates on clinic dates and times will be posted at [www.hss.gov.yk.ca](http://www.hss.gov.yk.ca)

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