



# The Regional Sun

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Summer 2009

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*What SCHR is doing to Go Green.*



**“We’re going Green”** – SaskPower and Sun Country Health Region kicked off a \$1.7 million contract for energy efficient upgrades to 21 health care facilities in the Region at a news conference in Tatagwa View in late May. Here, Judy May, Vice President Customer Services, SaskPower, and Saskatchewan Minister of Crown Corporations Ken Cheveldayoff, right, present a certificate recognizing the program to Cal Tant, President and CEO, Sun Country Health Region. *See back page for information about the program.*

## A publication of Sun Country Health Region



# Thoughts:

From the desk of Calvin Tant,  
President/CEO,  
Sun Country Regional Health Authority

Sun Country Health Region has been very busy over the past month working on pandemic influenza preparedness, in light of the identification of H1N1 virus in April.

Health authorities across North America and the rest of the world went on alert quickly because of the possibility the H1N1 virus could be the warning sign that an influenza pandemic (a worldwide influenza outbreak) could occur.

An influenza pandemic is expected to have very severe consequences, with over 70 per cent of the population potentially infected. In Canada, it is predicted that between 4.5 million and 10.5 million people could become ill. In Sun Country Health Region, over 18,500 people, or 35 per cent of the population, could become ill from influenza. The supplies and services you rely on every day could be seriously reduced as people stay away from work to care for themselves and their families.

Fortunately, Saskatchewan has experienced relatively few cases of H1N1 and these have been mild cases. Although there is no need to panic, it is a good idea for families to take steps that will help them respond, if necessary, to an influenza pandemic, as well as other emergency situations. Sun Country Health Region is doing our part to prepare for a possible pandemic. Is your family prepared for emergencies?

The public needs to do its part. That is; PREPARE by getting your household ready with the supplies you need for your family to be self-sufficient for at least 72 hours during an emergency and PREVENT infection by washing your hands often, coughing or sneezing into your arm, avoiding others when you are ill. This advice applies not just today, not just with this outbreak, but always.

## Sun Country Health Region Administration

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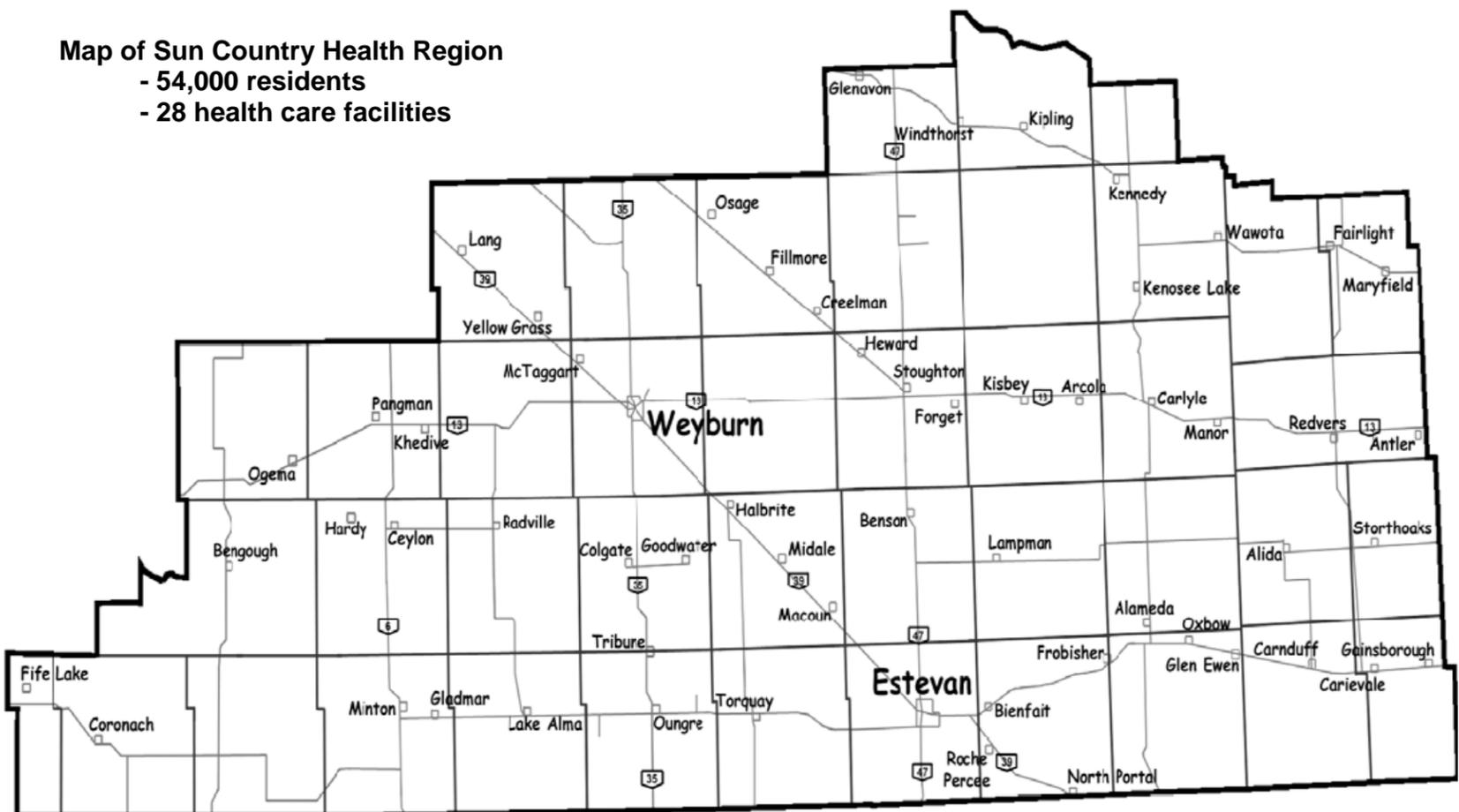
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### Map of Sun Country Health Region

- 54,000 residents
- 28 health care facilities



The staff  
that  
exercises  
together,  
stays  
together



Finding the time to exercise can be quite a feat these days.

It seems by the end of the day we are lucky to get into bed at a decent time after doing all the stuff that we need to get done for the next day. So exercising at work is a good option for those who can.

Sun Country Health Region's Physical Activity Coordinator Corrie Schultz, left, demonstrates to two staff members at the Bengough Health Centre some of her workplace exercises. This particular one is the resistance tubing exercises.

Corrie has created a five-day workout that staff can undertake during their coffee breaks. The workout takes only a few minutes while it rejuvenates them and gives them increased strength. Staff in the picture are: Tara Gauley, Environmental Service Worker and Jodi Bartlett, Administrative Assistant. Having the right exercises to target the weak areas that may cause pain down the road is a proactive approach and gives the staff some education on what they can do to lead healthy lives.

The workout is part of Sun Country Health Region's employee retention program.

# How to avoid the flu:

## Basic infection control to avoid getting sick:

The Public Health Agency of Canada advises Canadians to:

- Wash hands thoroughly with soap and warm water, or use hand sanitizer.
- Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze. Coughing and sneezing into the elbow will also help to reduce the spread of infection.
- Keep doing what you normally do, but stay home if you are sick.
- Check [www.fightflu.ca](http://www.fightflu.ca) for more information
- Check [www.voyage.gc.ca](http://www.voyage.gc.ca) for travel notices and advisories
- Call Healthline at 1-877-800-0002 or visit Healthlineonline at [www.healthlineonline.com/](http://www.healthlineonline.com/) or talk to a health professional if you experience flu-like symptoms.

## Consumers Advised Against Counterfeit and Unapproved H1N1 Flu Virus Products

Health Canada is advising Canadians not to purchase products claiming to fight or prevent H1N1 flu virus (human swine flu). While there are approved antiviral drugs that may help prevent or reduce the symptoms associated with the flu in general, there are currently no products authorized for sale in Canada that are indicated specifically for the treatment of H1N1 flu virus (swine flu).

## What is the best technique for washing my hands to avoid getting the flu?

Washing your hands often will help protect you from germs. Wash with soap and water or clean with alcohol-based hand cleaner.

We recommend that when you wash your hands -- with soap and warm water -- and that you wash for 15 to 20 seconds.

When soap and water are not available, alcohol-based disposable hand wipes or gel sanitizers may be used. You can find them in most supermarkets and drugstores.

If using gel, rub your hands until the gel is dry. The gel doesn't need water to work; the alcohol in it kills the germs on your hands.

*Please clip and save these two pages*



# What to do if you get sick:

## What is H1N1 flu?

More investigation is needed on how easily the virus spreads between people but it is believed that it is spread the same way as regular seasonal influenza.

Influenza and other respiratory infections are transmitted from person to person when germs enter the nose and/or throat.

Coughs and sneezes release germs into the air where they can be breathed in by others.

Germs can also rest on hard surfaces like counters and doorknobs, where they can be picked up on hands and transmitted to the respiratory system when someone touches their mouth and/or nose.

## If Your Doctor Tells You to Isolate at Home

This is advice on managing influenza illness at home when isolation practices are advised.

Influenza is a viral respiratory illness that causes fever and cough with sore throat, headache or muscle aches. In addition to these, children occasionally experience vomiting and diarrhea.

## What does home isolation mean? Why have I not been admitted to the hospital?

If your respiratory illness is mild to moderate, home isolation and treatment is less disruptive and more comfortable than a hospital.

If you must go into the community (i.e. to seek medical care), avoid exposing others by avoiding crowded areas and consider wearing a face mask.

## How long will I be in isolation?

Stay at home for seven days unless directed otherwise by your health care provider.

Reschedule appointments and coordinate with friends and family to pick up groceries, prescriptions etc. to reduce the risk of exposing others.

If you have been prescribed medication, complete the course of treatment recommended by your health care provider before returning to work.

## Should I remain in contact with anyone?

Ask your health care provider whether you should check back with them to report your health status.

However, if your symptoms of influenza worsen and you experience difficulty breathing, chest pain or high fever, contact Healthline at 1-877-800-0002 or visit [www.healthlineonline.com/](http://www.healthlineonline.com/) for further direction.

## What should I have at home during isolation?

**Comfort:** Ensure your home is supplied with basic needs such as telephone, drinking water, functioning bathroom, hygiene products and a comfortable sleeping area (preferably separate for other members of your household).

**Support:** ensure you have a personal resource who can check in on and help as necessary with meals and essential shopping and can keep you company.

## Are other people in the house at risk?

It is important that everyone in the household follow basic infection control measures to prevent the spread of the virus.

Other people living with or attending to you should:

- Practise frequent hand washing with soap and water.
- Use alcohol-based hand gels (containing at least 60% alcohol) when soap and water are not available and hands are not visibly dirty.
- If you are within two metres (six feet) of others at home, consider wearing a face mask. If you have questions, please contact HealthLine at 1-877-800-0002 or [www.healthlineonline.com/](http://www.healthlineonline.com/)

Your physician may recommend that those who have been in contact with you be isolated for some time in order to prevent spreading the virus prior to showing symptoms.

Your physician may also recommend that you self-isolate yourself from all people who are well while you have symptoms or up to 7 days (whatever is longer).

## If you experience a worsening of your symptoms such as:

- Difficulty breathing or shortness of breath
- Pain or pressure in the chest or abdomen
- Sudden dizziness
- Confusion
- Severe or persistent vomiting

## Call your doctor or seek emergency care

## In Children watch for:

- Fast breathing or trouble breathing
- Bluish skin color
- Not drinking fluids
- Not waking up or not interacting
- Being so irritable that the child does not want to be held
- Flu-like symptoms improve, but then return with fever and worse cough
- Fever with a rash

# Questions about HPV -1

## **What is human papillomavirus (HPV)?**

Human papillomavirus (HPV) is one of the most common sexually transmitted infections in Canada and it is spread by close contact during sexual activity with an infected partner.

Three out of four people who are sexually active will come into contact with HPV.

Nearly 60 per cent of girls become infected within 48 months of becoming sexually active.

Most people have no symptoms from an HPV infection, so they usually do not know that they have been infected. Most HPV infections clear up and do not cause health problems. If the infection does persist, it may lead to pre-cancerous changes in the cells of the cervix that may lead to cancer.

## **Who should consider HPV vaccination?**

In Saskatchewan, the Ministry of Health is providing access to HPV vaccine on an ongoing basis for girls in Grade Six.

The National Advisory Committee on Immunization (NACI) recommends that:

- Females aged nine to 13 years of age are the priority for HPV vaccine as the vaccine provides the most protection for girls if it is provided before they become sexually active.
- Females aged 14 to 26 years of age would benefit from HPV vaccine even if they were already sexually active.

NACI does not make any recommendations for the use of HPV vaccine in females over 26 years of age. Physicians may choose to consider the vaccine in individual circumstances.

## **Why is the Saskatchewan Ministry of Health offering HPV vaccine in Grade 6?**

HPV vaccine will be partnered with the current Grade Six school-based immunization program where male and female students receive vaccination for hepatitis B, meningitis, and chickenpox.

The National Advisory Committee on Immunization recommended that females aged nine to 13 years of age are the priority for HPV vaccine as the vaccine provides the most protection for girls if it is provided before they become sexually active.

This is why Saskatchewan is providing HPV vaccine for girls in Grade Six.

The Saskatchewan Ministry of Health introduced the Human Papillomavirus (HPV) immunization program in the Fall of 2009 after receiving funding from the Federal government for this program.

In 2008-09 only, Grade Seven students will also be eligible to receive the publicly-funded HPV vaccine through the existing school-based immunization programs. This was done to ensure that Saskatchewan girls received the same immunizations as females in jurisdictions who began immunizing against HPV in 2007.

## **If I am sexually active, should I be immunized with HPV vaccine?**

Females aged 14 to 26 years of age would benefit from HPV vaccine even if they were already sexually active, as they may not yet have an HPV infection.

If they have already been infected with HPV, it is very unlikely that they have been infected with all four types of HPV that are included in the vaccine.

Females who are already sexually active should ensure they go for a regular Pap test.

## **If I am not sexually active, should I be immunized with HPV vaccine?**

Immunization programs are designed to protect people before they are exposed to a communicable disease. The HPV vaccine will be most effective when it is given before girls are exposed to HPV through sexual activity. Saskatchewan studies have shown that 13.1 per cent of girls have their first sexual intercourse between 12 and 14 years of age and 50 per cent of girls are sexually active by the age of 16.

## **Where can I go to get the HPV vaccine?**

Public Health Nurses provide HPV vaccination for Grade 6 female students through the school immunization program.

HPV vaccine is only provided without charge by the Saskatchewan Ministry of Health for the Grade 6 immunization program.

Some physicians and primary health care nurses provide HPV immunization for young women who are not in the Ministry of Health target group (Grade 6).

## **How many cases of cervical cancer occur on average each year in Saskatchewan?**

In Saskatchewan between 1996 and 2005, there was an average of 45 new cases of cervical cancer each year. Approximately 14 women die from cervical cancer each year.



# Questions about HPV -2

The goal of HPV immunization is to reduce the risk of developing cervical cancer due to HPV infection. The HPV vaccine does not replace the need for women to have regular pap smear screening. A pap test is the only way to find abnormal cervical cells and/or cervical cancer.

## **What is in the HPV vaccine?**

The HPV vaccine is not a live vaccine and it does not cause HPV infection in girls. The vaccine has no components that affect the safety or effectiveness of other vaccines. The vaccine used in the Saskatchewan Ministry of Health program is called Gardasil®. This vaccine includes inactive proteins that come from four strains of HPV. These four strains of the HPV virus included in the vaccine are associated with approximately 70 per cent of cases of cancer of the cervix and 90 per cent of cases of genital warts. The HPV vaccine does not protect against other sexually transmitted infections.

## **Is the HPV vaccine safe?**

Health Canada conducts rigorous scientific review about a vaccine's safety, effectiveness and quality prior to granting approval for use in Canada. There have been no reports of serious illness related to the HPV vaccine (Gardasil®) in Canada.

The HPV vaccine is not a live vaccine and it does not cause HPV in girls. The vaccine has no components that affect the safety or effectiveness of other vaccines.

For more information on the safety of the vaccine, visit the:

1. Public Health Agency of Canada - "The FACTS on the Safety and Effectiveness of HPV Vaccine" at <http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/std-mts/hpv-vph/fact-faits-vacc-eng.php>

2. National Advisory Committee on Immunization statement on HPV vaccine at <http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/publicat/ccdr-rmtc/07pdf/acs33-02.pdf>

3. Saskatchewan Ministry of Health website at [www.health.gov.sk.ca/immunization](http://www.health.gov.sk.ca/immunization).

## **Are there any side effects associated with HPV vaccine?**

If you have any concerns about the safety of HPV vaccine be sure to discuss them with your health care provider.

There are very few potential side effects and the most common side effects are like those expected with any type of vaccination: fever, swelling, redness and/or pain at the needle site. There have been reports of fainting following the vaccination, which is also not

uncommon when vaccines are administered to adolescents.

For more information on the side effects of HPV vaccine and other information on HPV vaccines, visit the:

1. Public Health Agency of Canada - "Human Papillomavirus (HPV) Prevention and HPV Vaccine: Questions and Answers" at

<http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/std-mts/hpv-vph/hpv-vph-vaccine-eng.php>

2. National Advisory Committee on Immunization statement on HPV vaccine at <http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/publicat/ccdr-rmtc/07pdf/acs33-02.pdf>

3. Saskatchewan Ministry of Health website at [www.health.gov.sk.ca/immunization](http://www.health.gov.sk.ca/immunization).





## Sun Country Health Region upgrades facilities to save energy and dollars

Sun Country Health Region joined with SaskPower this year to spend \$1.7 million on energy efficient upgrades in 21 health care facilities to save power, save money and help protect the environment. This project involves improvements to heating, cooling, ventilation and lighting systems in 21 of Sun Country's Health Region's facilities, and will allow it to implement facility improvements to help reduce its energy costs, improve patient care with better facility conditions and contribute to its environmental objectives – all within its existing budget.

Through this project, SaskPower is helping Sun Country Health Region save over \$167,000 annually in utility costs. This includes an annual savings of nearly \$120,000 in electricity, over \$39,000 in natural gas, and about \$5,000 in water and sewage costs. Upgrades made through the project will realize an annual reduction in electricity demand of 4,230 kilowatts (kW); annual energy savings of over 1 million kilowatt hours (kWh), and save 118,000 cubic metres of natural gas annually. That's the amount of electricity needed to power about 125 homes, and the amount of natural gas needed to heat about 40 homes.

“Utility costs are a big part of every health region's

annual budget in Canada and we are no exception. So anything we can do to reduce these costs is a plus for us,” says Cal Tant, President and CEO, Sun Country Health Region. “I'm told the saving is the equivalent of taking 170 midsize vehicles off Saskatchewan roads. We're very proud of that,” he says.

This project will have a positive effect on the environment both inside and outside the facilities. Energy retrofits and upgrades to Sun Country's operations will reduce carbon dioxide emissions by over 1,000 tonnes, nitrogen oxide emissions by 2.2 tonnes and reduce sulfur dioxide emissions by 6.1 tonnes each year.

Through this project, Sun Country Health Region is joining a growing group of commercial SaskPower customers which have altered their buildings for energy savings over the past 10 years. SaskPower's alliance with Honeywell has delivered energy-saving projects to over 130 facilities across the province, including schools, school board offices, commercial buildings, government and health facilities, and SaskPower's own buildings in Regina. To date, the \$28.3 million in projects completed as part of the program are saving 25 million kilowatt hours (kWh) of electricity each year.