



Council of Canadian Academies
Conseil des académies canadiennes

News Release

Protecting Canadians from Influenza

Ottawa - December 19, 2007 - The Council of Canadian Academies today released a study entitled “Influenza Transmission and the Role of Personal Protective Respiratory Equipment: An Assessment of the Evidence.” The Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC) asked the Council to investigate how seasonal and pandemic influenza are transmitted and, based on those findings, to assess the contribution of respirators and surgical masks to the prevention of transmission.

The report of the study represents the consensus findings of a 13-member panel of experts, chaired by Dr. Donald Low, Microbiologist-in-Chief at Mount Sinai Hospital in Toronto.

“We were asked to prepare our report based on the research and clinical evidence that already exists,” said Dr. Low. “Our conclusions reflect the diverse nature of both the research available and the learned opinions of our panel members who include experts in virology, infection control, occupational health and safety, nursing and evaluation of protective equipment” (see list of panelists attached).

The findings of the expert panel have been conveyed to PHAC and are available on the Council’s website, www.scienceadvice.ca.

About the Council of Canadian Academies

The Council of Canadian Academies is a not-for-profit organization which commenced operation in early 2006. The primary mission of the Council is to provide independent, expert assessments of the science that is relevant to matters of significant public interest with the goal of informing public debate and decision making. Its members are the RSC: The Academies of Arts, Humanities and Sciences of Canada; the Canadian Academy of Engineering; and the Canadian Academy of Health Sciences. The Council is supported by a founding grant from the Government of Canada but is independent from government. Its reports are prepared by panels of experts appointed by the Council. All reports are made public in both official languages. To learn more about the Council of Canadian Academies or to download Council reports, visit www.scienceadvice.ca.

For more information:

Samantha Rae
Communications Manager
Council of Canadian Academies
613-567-5000, extension 256
samantha.rae@scienceadvice.ca



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Expert Panel on Influenza & Personal Protective Respiratory Equipment

Dr. Donald Low, FCAHS, (Chair)

Microbiologist-in-Chief, Department of Microbiology, Mount Sinai Hospital, University Health Network and Medical Director, Ontario Public Health Laboratory, and Professor, University of Toronto.

Dr. Karen Bartlett

Associate Professor, School of Environmental Health, University of British Columbia.

The Honourable Justice Jean-Louis Baudouin, FRSC

Quebec Court of Appeal, Montreal

Dr. Anne-Marie Bourgault

Professeur titulaire de clinique, Département de microbiologie et immunologie, Faculté de médecine, Université de Montréal

Dr. Lisa Brosseau

Associate Professor, Division of Environmental Health Sciences, School of Public Health, University of Minnesota

Mrs. Penny Ericson

Dean and Professor Emerita, Faculty of Nursing, University of New Brunswick

Dr. Michael Gardam

Director, Infection Prevention and Control & Medical Director, Tuberculosis Clinic, University Health Network, Toronto

Mr. Robert Janssen

Senior Policy Analyst, Prevention Policy & Regulation Review Department, Policy & Research Division, WorkSafeBC

Dr. Allison McGeer

Microbiologist, Infectious Disease Consultant, Department of Microbiology, Mount Sinai Hospital, Toronto

Dr. Linda O'Brien-Pallas, FCAHS

Professor, Faculty of Nursing, University of Toronto

Dr. Grant Stiver

Professor, Assistant Head Infectious Disease, Department of Medicine, University of British Columbia

Dr. Susan Tamblin

Public Health Consultant & former Medical Officer of Health, Stratford, Ontario

Dr. Raymond Tellier

Microbiologist & Senior Associate Scientist, Research Institute, Hospital for Sick Children & Associate Professor, University of Toronto



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Additional Details

Report Title:	Influenza Transmission and the Role of Personal Protective Respiratory Equipment: An Assessment of the Evidence
Report Author:	The Expert Panel on Influenza and Personal Protective Respiratory Equipment
Organization:	Council of Canadian Academies
Sponsor:	Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC)
Release Date:	December 19, 2007
Spokesperson:	Dr. Donald Low (Chair)
Contact:	Samantha Rae, Communications Manager, Council of Canadian Academies - 613-567-5000, samantha.rae@scienceadvice.ca
Terms:	For the purpose of the report a “respirator” is defined as “a fitted device that protects the wearer against inhalation of harmful contaminants – i.e., it protects the wearer from others who are or might be infected.” N95 respirators are the only type of respirators discussed in the report. A “surgical mask” is defined as “an unfitted device intended to reduce transfer of potentially infectious bodily fluids from an infected individual.”