

Peterborough County-City Health Unit: Managing SARS

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10/27/2003



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This presentation will cover:

- Background
- Staffing
- Staff Education
- Information Overload
- Communication with Hospital and Precautions
- Communication with other Health Care Agencies and Physicians
- Quarantine

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Background

- 1 area hospital
- population 130,000
- no cases of SARS in our area hospital
- 1 probable resident who worked and was hospitalized in Toronto
- 93 individuals under quarantine

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Staffing

- Additional hours for management and professional staff
- Designate staff to respond to inquiries
- One public health inspector assigned to monitor individuals under quarantine and to deliver masks and thermometers

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Staffing continued

- Communicable disease control nurses relieved of their duties to cover SARS inquiries
- Cold chain inspections delayed
- Additional staff hired to continue hepatitis B vaccine clinics, for screening and to conduct hand washing sessions

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Staff Education

- Daily updates through meetings and written materials for CD staff
- CD staff advised of current directives and website address
- Supervisor and hospital infection control staff presented on SARS at health unit's All Staff Day

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Staff Education continued

- Two briefings by Medical Officer of Health for all staff

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Information overload

- Supervisor created a filing system
- One secretary assigned to file documents
- One staff assigned to collate and file newspaper articles

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Information continued

- Supervisor reviewed documents received and highlighted new information for staff

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Hospital and Health Unit

- Regular meetings with hospital infection control staff
- Hospital invited to attend Ministry teleconferences
- Directives faxed to hospital

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Hospital and Health Unit cont'd

- Shared resources
- Health unit consulted on SARS information handouts, isolation handouts and discharge kits
- Hospital called health unit to advise of individuals to be placed into quarantine

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Hospital and Health Unit cont'd

- Supervisor attended daily briefing sessions at the hospital
- Hospital press conference held at the health unit regarding visitor restrictions and directive changes
- Medical Officer of Health held two meetings with hospital and long term care facilities

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Hospital and Health Unit cont'd

- Medical Officer of Health held two question and answer periods for hospital staff
- Medical Officer of Health visited hospital floors to discuss changes in directives for affected staff
- Medical Officer of Health facilitated access to information for hospital

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Hospital Precautions

- Medical Officer of Health restricted staff from working in the hospital if they worked in a level 1 or higher GTA hospital
- Medical Officer of Health restricted a health care worker from working in the hospital for ten days after returning from a visit to China

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Hospital Precautions continued

- Medical Officer of Health advised physician to re-route return vacation flight to avoid SARS infected area
- Hospital implemented screening, set-up respiratory assessment area in Emergency, had negative pressure rooms in ICU and retro-fitted rooms on medical unit with negative pressure rooms

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Communication with other health care agencies and physicians

- Newsletter faxed to family physicians and health care facilities
- CD staff responded to inquiries
- Medical Officer of Health responded to physician questions

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Communication cont'd

- Access Centre consulted with Health Unit regarding the quarantine status of clients receiving home care services
- Medical Officer of Health held two briefings with health care agencies
- CD staff continued to attend infection control meetings in long term care facilities

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Other

- Medical Officer sent Supervisor of Communicable Diseases Programs to assist York Region Health Unit

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Quarantine

- 1. Received notification from Toronto Public Health by fax or phone
- 2. Established contact with client by telephone to confirm information

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Quarantine continued

- 3. Quarantine procedure explained
 - ◆ stay inside home for duration of quarantine period
 - ◆ no visitors
 - ◆ wear N95 mask when other family members in the room
 - ◆ sleep in a separate room
 - ◆ don't share utensils

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Quarantine continued

- ◆ take and record temperatures twice daily
- ◆ wash hands frequently
- ◆ call the health unit if temperature exceeds 38°C or if health status changes
- ◆ call first before going to hospital or physician's office
- ◆ initially, the information was provided over the phone, later, some individuals received the above information in a written format

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Quarantine continued

- 4. Masks and thermometers were delivered by public health inspector (no contact at the time of delivery)
- 5. Contacts were called twice daily at various times to determine if their health status changed and to ensure quarantine compliance

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Quarantine continued

■ Statistics

- ◆ 93 individuals under quarantine
- ◆ age range 2 months to 88 years
- ◆ 16 health care workers
- ◆ *All complied with quarantine instructions resulting in no orders being issued.*

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If we had to do it over again...

- Enter all contact and case information into a database which was accessible to all communicable disease staff
- Increase number of briefings for all staff
- Fax information to physicians and health care agencies

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If we had to do it over again...

- Reallocate support staff
- Assign one person to collect and send data

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■ Thank you

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