



October 19, 2009

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Dear Physician:

**RE: New PG13700 – GP Office Visit for H1N1  
After Hours Coverage  
H1N1 Testing for Clinical Management  
Subscribe Function – H1N1 Physician Website**

**New PG13700 – GP Office Visit for H1N1**

The volume of influenza-like-illness cases continues to rise in British Columbia and as a result the temporary fee *PG13700 – GP Office Visit for H1N1* has been declared effective by the Provincial Health Officer as of October 19, 2009. This fee is available to General Practitioners to diagnose and treat patients with suspected or active H1N1 symptoms and is not subject to daily volume discount rules. *PG13700 – GP Office Visit for H1N1* complements the other temporary fee *PG13705 Telephone Advice Regarding H1N1*, available to both GPs and Specialists, which became effective October 1, 2009. For more information on the H1N1 fees please see the H1N1 Physician website located at: <http://www.hls.gov.bc.ca/pho/physh1n1.html>.

**After Hours Coverage**

In attempts to reduce the impact of H1N1 on Emergency Departments and to ensure that emergency department resources are appropriately utilized to treat those H1N1 patients who are seriously ill, physicians should ensure adequate 24-hour/7 day after hours coverage. It is expected that the majority of H1N1 cases may be diagnosed and treated by general practitioners and the new H1N1 telephone advice and office visit fee codes facilitate payment for these services. Please be respectfully reminded of the policy statement made by the College of Physicians and Surgeons of British Columbia regarding after hours coverage:

*Physicians have an ethical obligation to look after their established patients on a 24 hour basis, either personally or through organized on-call schedules. When physicians sign out to someone else, the physician assuming responsibility for patient care must be aware of that responsibility and have confirmed their willingness to do so. Leaving an answering machine message stating "Go to the nearest emergency room or walk-in clinic" is not an acceptable practice unless the physicians at such facilities have confirmed their willingness to assume that call responsibility. Call schedules are physicians' private arrangements, but must be in place for both traditional practices and after-hour (walk-in) clinics. Patients who are seen by a physician must have access to that physician or their alternate if required subsequent to that interaction. .../2*

For further information on the issue of after hours coverage please see the *College of Physicians and Surgeons of British Columbia Resource Manual – After Hours Coverage* located at <https://www.cpsbc.ca/node/130>.

**H1N1 Testing for Clinical Management**


Physicians are reminded that testing for H1N1 for clinical management is rarely indicated and is not necessary for patients with mild illness. Testing is recommended only for cases of suspected influenza related illness requiring hospitalization.

**Subscribe Function – H1N1 Physician Website**

The H1N1 website located at <http://www.hls.gov.bc.ca/pho/physh1n1.html> continues to be the centralized and ongoing source of current information for physicians in BC about emerging issues surrounding the 2009 H1N1 pandemic. The website contains a “subscribe” function. The advantage of subscribing to the H1N1 physician website is the ability to receive e-mail notification of changes or updates in H1N1 related information as it occurs. Those physicians who have currently subscribed have found this function very useful as having the most up-to-date information enables them to better manage their H1N1 patients. We highly encourage you to utilize this function.

We greatly appreciate your continued efforts and commitment to your patients during the 2009 H1N1 Pandemic.

Yours Sincerely,



Dr. Perry Kendall  
OBC, MBBS, MHSc, FRCPC  
Provincial Health Officer  
Ministry of Healthy Living & Sport



Sheila Taylor  
Assistant Deputy Minister  
Medical Services Division  
Ministry of Health Services