

## **FLU PANDEMIC REQUIRES NATIONAL PLAN, SAY ATLANTIC MAYORS**

(Charlottetown, October 16, 2009) --With the effects of the seasonal flu starting to be felt in the region, mayors from across Atlantic Canada are concerned that the lack of a national pandemic plan could leave many communities in the region vulnerable to a potential H1N1 outbreak.

The mayors, in Charlottetown for a meeting of the Atlantic Mayors Congress (AMC) say that an outbreak of the deadly H1N1 virus could leave many front-line municipal workers, from police to emergency personnel to health workers sick and unable to do their jobs.

"With flu season on us, we cannot wait much longer for a national H1N1 pandemic plan," said Halifax mayor and Chair of the AMC Peter Kelly. "Municipal workers are at the front lines of any potential health emergency but we have yet to see any strategy to keep them safe and on the job."

The mayors are calling on the federal government to quickly roll out a comprehensive plan that takes into account the critical role of municipal front-line workers as well as the need for factual and timely information and communication.

The mayors say that while many municipalities have developed or are developing their own pandemic plans this is being done in a largely uncoordinated way, without any national support. This has left many smaller communities across the region and the country, struggling to prepare for the potential health emergency.

Compounding the problem, the mayors say that there is so much, sometimes conflicting, information on H1N1 that confusion could set in with catastrophic health consequences.

"We cannot rely on a patchwork of pandemic responses or a deluge of conflicting information" said Mayor Kelly. "Municipalities from St. John's to Edmunston must be assured that their citizens and the services they rely on will be protected and only the national government can provide the leadership, the resources and the coordination necessary."