

news



3106 Joseph Howe Drive
Halifax, Nova Scotia B3L 4L7
www.nstu.ca • pr@nstu.ca
Tel 902.477.5621
Fax 902.477.3517

N O V A S C O T I A T E A C H E R S U N I O N

Date: November 5, 2009 **For Release:** Immediately **Contact:** Marcia Hirtle

NSTU President wants N. S. Education Minister to send pregnant teachers home

NSTU President Alexis Allen is calling on Nova Scotia's Minister of Education Marilyn More to send all pregnant teachers home. Allen has asked the minister to immediately notify all boards and the NSCC and instruct them to reassign all pregnant members to work at home with no loss of salary and benefits until such time as they have been able to receive the H1N1 vaccine and have had sufficient time to have the vaccine reach its full effectiveness.

"We have to protect our pregnant teachers from the very real possibility of contracting the H1N1 virus while at the workplace," says NSTU President Alexis Allen. "Pregnant teachers are in daily contact with the group with the highest risk of H1N1 infection – children under 15."

Canada's chief public health officer Dr. David Butler-Jones says children under 15 are not considered a high priority group because they are not at high risk of dying from H1N1 flu. However, there are very serious risks for pregnant teachers who may contract the virus from them.

According to the Public Health Agency of Canada (PHAC), 93 pregnant women in Canada have been hospitalized since the H1N1 outbreak. Four of them have died.

PHAC says women who do catch the virus in their second or third trimester, or within four weeks of giving birth, are more likely to suffer complications like pneumonia and severe respiratory distress. This can put both the mother and the fetus' health at risk. Severe complications from the flu could lead to early delivery or miscarriage.

"It's irresponsible to expect our pregnant teachers to come to the workplace every day and risk exposure to the virus," says Allen. "We need the Minister of Education to take the critical preventative measure of sending them home."

The Nova Scotia Teachers Union represents some 10,900 public school teachers, Community College faculty and professional support employees.

-30-

For further information contact:
Marcia Hirtle, NSTU Public Relations Department
902-479-4711 (office) Email: pr@nstu.ca