

Most pandemic plans in Ontario hospitals have not been tested: study

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One quarter of Ontario hospitals surveyed in a Queen's University-led study do not have an influenza pandemic plan and few plans that do exist have been tested. In addition, key players were not involved in developing the plans, and funding for pandemic preparedness was inadequate.

"It's not good enough just to have a plan, you have to test it. You have to know how well it will work in an emergency," says Dick Zoutman, Queen's professor of Community Health and Epidemiology and lead researcher on the study. "The number should be 100 per cent tested. I'm surprised and concerned we aren't there already in the face of SARS and [bird flu](#)."

The study's findings are published in the February issue of the *American Journal of Infection Control*.

Small and rural hospitals surveyed are less likely to have tested their pandemic plans because staff members already have multiple duties and may not have pandemic expertise.

"Planning for a pandemic is a complicated and enormous task," says Dr. Zoutman.

"More funding should be made available to these smaller hospitals."

"You have to look at staffing levels, supply chain - everything from the

basement to the ceiling," he adds. "It's like planning a wedding, except you don't know the date, who the bride and groom are, what is to be served at dinner and you have to keep the flowers fresh for when the big day happens."

Provided by Queen's University

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