



# NEWS RELEASE

H1N1 Business Preparedness Survey, March 2010

## **BETTER SAFE THAN SORRY**

### *More Than One-Third of Canadian Businesses (35%) Have Taken Steps To Plan For The Effects Of H1N1 In Their Workplaces*

#### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Winnipeg** – For a significant proportion of small- and medium-sized Canadian businesses, prevention is the best medicine when it comes to staving off the effects of the H1N1 virus.

In a Probe Research Inc. survey conducted exclusively for the International Centre for Infectious Diseases (ICID), one-third of Canadian business executives surveyed (35%) reported that their organizations have developed or are currently developing a strategy to deal with the effects of the H1N1 flu. While nearly two-thirds of these Canadian business executives (65%) have yet to establish a pandemic plan for their workplaces, three-quarters (75%) report that they now feel more knowledgeable about what they must do in order to plan for a future pandemic.

“It is encouraging that a large proportion of smaller Canadian businesses are taking proactive steps to prevent the spread of H1N1,” noted Wendy Schettler, director of public health programs for the International Centre for Infectious Diseases. “While we urge every business to create a pandemic plan and put it in place, it is positive to see that many Canadian businesses with less than 200 employees recognize the need to put a strategy in place so they can continue to operate even if a pandemic strikes.”

This study found that companies with larger workforces were more likely than small businesses to have developed a contingency plan to deal with employee absenteeism and other effects of H1N1 (53% of companies with 15+ employees put a pandemic strategy in place, versus 36% of firms with 5-14 employees and only 9% of firms with less than five employees).

When asked to state how H1N1 concerns have affected their operations, most of these businesses reported that they encouraged their employees to properly wash their hands (65%). Slightly less than one-half of these employers (41%) reported that they changed their company's cleaning practices to stop the

spread of the virus, while one in ten (10%) noted that they amended human resources policies because of the pandemic.

Other key findings from this survey include:

- Among businesses that developed a strategy for dealing with H1N1, more than one-half (52%) reported that they acted upon this plan.
- Even if they did not act upon their pandemic plan, an overwhelming majority of these firms (83%) felt that it was helpful to be prepared for the spread of H1N1 in their workplaces.
- Nearly three-quarters of those businesses with a pandemic plan (74%) reported that this procedure could also be used to deal with future health-related emergencies.

## **BACKGROUND GRAPHS ATTACHED**

*The International Centre for Infectious Diseases (ICID) is a Winnipeg-based not-for-profit organization that brings people and resources together to combat the spread of infectious diseases worldwide. The Pandemic Planning Project is an initiative undertaken by the ICID, the Canadian Chambers of Commerce and other partners to develop pandemic planning tools for use by small- and medium-sized businesses. For more information about the Pandemic Planning Project, please visit [www.BusinessFluPlan.ca](http://www.BusinessFluPlan.ca).*

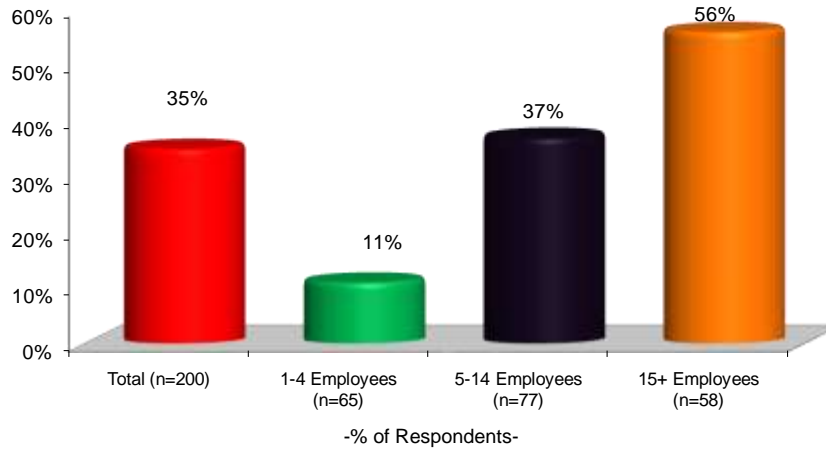
*Probe Research Inc. ([www.probe-research.com](http://www.probe-research.com)) is a full-service market research firm located in Winnipeg, Manitoba. Probe Research Inc. interviewed a random and regionally-representative sampling of the owners and managers of 200 Canadian businesses with fewer than 200 employees. The interviews were conducted by telephone between February 24<sup>th</sup> and March 10<sup>th</sup>, 2010. With a sample of 200, one can be certain of an accuracy rate of  $\pm 6.93$  percent (19 times out of 20). The margin of error is higher when looking at sub-populations or when examining the survey results on a regional basis.*

**For more information on this survey or to arrange an interview  
with Wendy Schettler, please contact:**

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## Prevalence of Pandemic Planning

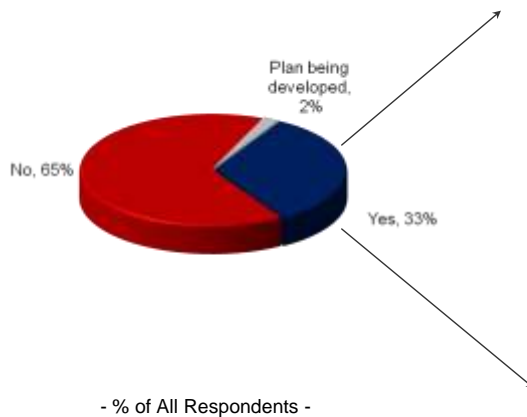
"Has your business developed a plan for dealing with the H1N1 flu?"\*



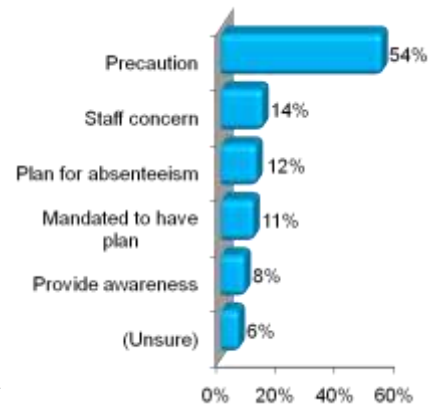
\*Includes companies that are currently developing plans

## Prevalence of Pandemic Planning

Q.9 "Has your business developed a plan for dealing with the H1N1 flu?" (n=200)



Q.11 "What were the main reasons for developing this plan?" (n=65\*)

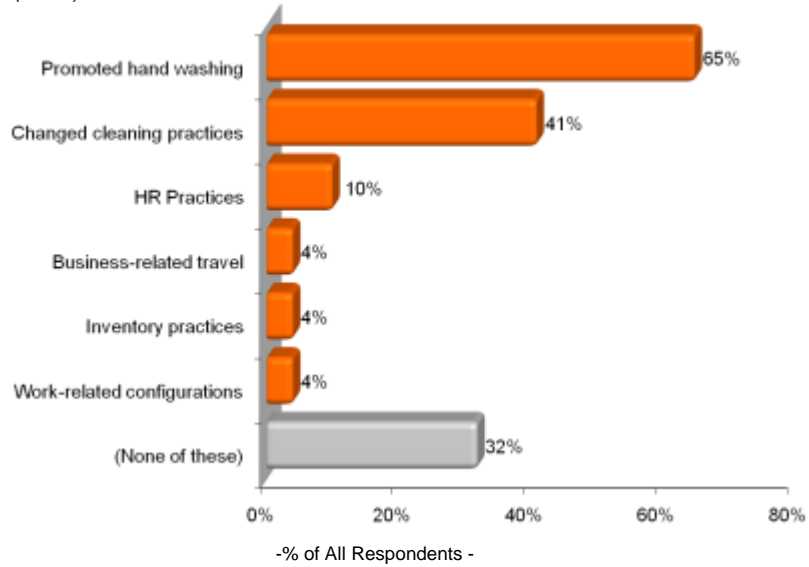


- % of Respondents Currently With a Pandemic Plan -

\*Caution: Small base

## Practices Adopted to Combat H1N1

Q.5 "Were any of the following policies and practices relating to your business affected by concerns about the H1N1 flu?" (n=200)



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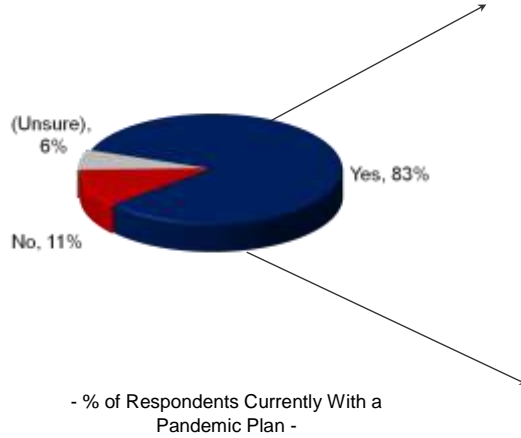
	Total	NO. OF EMPLOYEES			DEVELOPED PLAN	
		<5	5-14	15+	Yes	No
(Base)	(200) (%)	(65*) (%)	(77*) (%)	(58*) (%)	(69*) (%)	(130) (%)
Encouraged hand washing	65	49	62	86	84	55
Changed cleaning practices	41	23	34	71	62	30
(None of these)	32	49	31	14	14	42
Others	22	4	14	53	43	10

\*Caution: Small base

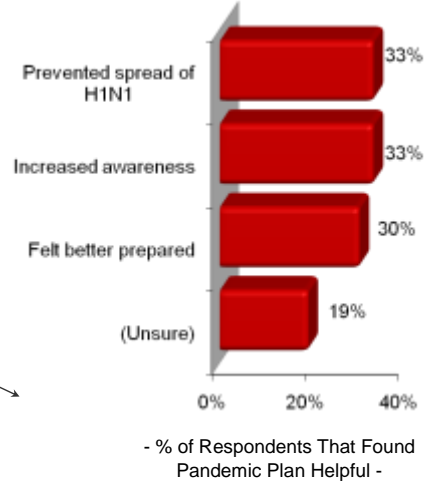
-% of All Respondents -

# Perceived Benefits of H1N1 Planning

**Q.22** "Do you believe that your planning was helpful in dealing with any possible effects of the H1N1 pandemic?" (n=65\*)



**Q.23** "How was it helpful?" (n=54\*)



\*Caution: Small base