

**H1N1 vs. Avian Flu (2005) and SARS (2003):
Both Employers and Provincial Ministries of Health
Much Better Prepared; Health Ministries Earn Good
Performance Scores on Pandemic Preparations for First Time**

BDO Dunwoody Weekly CEO/Business Leader Poll

By COMPAS in *Canadian Business*

For Publication October 5, 2009



**COMPAS Inc.
Public Opinion and Customer Research
October 5, 2009**

H1N1

BDO Dunwoody Weekly CEO/Business Leader Poll by COMPAS in Canadian Business for Publication October 5, 2009

1.0 Overview

COMPAS has been tracking the assessments by CEOs and business leaders on the business panel of employers' and provincial governments' efforts to forestall or prepare for pandemics. Panelists are pleased with what they see. They perceive both governments and employers as greatly improving their handling of these risks. Almost two-thirds of employers are seen as taking more precautions than normal. Provincial health ministries also earn plaudits and good performance scores for their pandemic-related efforts.

These are the key findings from this past week's Internet survey of CEOs and business leaders on the COMPAS panel. The weekly business survey is undertaken for *Canadian Business* magazine under sponsorship of BDO Dunwoody LLP.

2.0 Detailed Findings

Employers and provincial health ministries are both taking H1N1 far more seriously than they did previously in the case of Avian flu and SARS according to CEOs and business leaders on the COMPAS panel, as shown in tables 2a and b. CEOs and business leaders are almost four times more likely to say that employers are taking supra-normal precautions today than they did during the 2005 Avian flu scare and more than twice as likely to say so than in respect of SARS (table 2a). Meanwhile, provincial health ministries are earning good performance scores for the first time, as shown in table 2b. The average performance score of 62 points for handling H1N1 is a solid score by the standards of performance by government in COMPAS' very large data base of performance scores.

In a pattern consistent with the higher performance scores being given provincial health ministries than in the past, a more than two-thirds majority of the COMPAS business panel say that provincial health ministries have



H1N1

BDO Dunwoody Weekly CEO/Business Leader Poll by COMPAS in Canadian Business for Publication October 5, 2009

improved their ability to handle potential pandemics, as shown in table 2c. Almost none say that ministries' abilities have declined.

Table 2a: Employers' Level of Precaution in the Case of H1N1, Avian Flu, and SARS

	H1N1 ¹	Avian Flu ²	SARS ³
	Oct. 2009	Oct. 2005	April 2003
A lot more precaution than normal	17	2	7
Somewhat more	48	15	27
No more and no less than normal	29	79	60
Somewhat less than they would in normal times	1	1	0
A lot less precaution than they would in normal times	1	1	1
Don't know or no opinion	4	1	5

¹ (Q2) Employers could react to an H1N1 outbreak by watching employees more carefully, sending them home at the earliest sign of any flu-like symptom, making emergency plans in case of a contagion at the workplace, introducing strong hygiene practices, or taking other precautions. So far as you can tell, are employers taking... [ROTATE POLES].

² Wording 2005: "Employers could react to an Avian flu outbreak by watching employees more carefully, sending them home at the earliest sign of any flu-like symptom, making emergency plans in case of a contagion at the workplace, introducing strong hygiene practices, or taking other precautions. So far as you can tell, are employers taking..."

³ Wording 2003: "Turning now to the issue of SARS, employers can react to the SARS outbreak by watching employees more carefully, sending them home at the earliest sign of any flu-like symptom, making emergency plans in case of a contagion at the workplace, introducing strong hygiene practices, or taking other precautions. So far as you can tell, are employers taking [ROTATE POLES]"



H1N1

BDO Dunwoody Weekly CEO/Business Leader Poll by COMPAS in Canadian Business for Publication October 5, 2009

Table 2b: Provincial Health Ministries' Performance Scores on 100 Point Scales—H1N1 vs. Avian Flu (2005) and SARS (2003)

	Mean	DNK
SARS ⁴	55	1
Avian Flu ⁵	45	2
H1N1 ⁶	62	3

Table 2c: (Q5) "In your estimation, has the ability of provincial Ministries of Health to handle potential pandemics... [ROTATE POLES]"

	%
Improved a lot	20
Improved somewhat	51
Remained the same	22
Declined some what	3
Declined a lot	1
Don't know or no opinion	4

⁴ (Q4) Thinking back to how provincial Ministries of Health handled SARS, what grade on a 100 point performance scale would you have given them at the time?

⁵ Wording in 2005: On a 100 point school report card-type scale, for its leadership on the issue of Avian flu, what performance score would you give your provincial government...?

⁶ (Q6) If Canada or some of its provinces experienced an H1N1 threat as big or bigger than the SARS threat, what grade on a 100 point performance scale would you predict that the provincial Ministries of Health would deserve?



H1N1

BDO Dunwoody Weekly CEO/Business Leader Poll by COMPAS in Canadian Business for Publication October 5, 2009

Perceiving both employers and governments to be doing better jobs than in the past, members of the panel are even less likely than in the past to believe that employers should be held liable if an employee contracts H1N1, as shown in table 2d. Meanwhile, only a minority, albeit a large minority, believe that H1N1 is apt to turn into an actual pandemic, as shown in table 2e.

Table 2d: (Q3) If an employee contracted H1N1 through the course of his work, do you think that the employer should be held liable? [ROTATE POLES] [TRACKER]?

	H1N1	Avian Flu ⁷	SARS ⁸
	Oct. 2009	Oct. 2005	April 2003
Definitely not	80	64	74
Probably not	17	28	21
Probably	1	5	4
Definitely	1	1	0
Don't know or no opinion	1	1	1

Table 2e: (Q1) As you may know, there is talk of the H1N1 flu and its potential rise to pandemic proportions. Using a 100 point probability scale where 100 means that we will definitely have a pandemic within two years and 0 definitely not, what is your estimate of its probability? [TRACKER]?

	MEAN	DNK
H1N1 October 2009	42	0
Avian Flu October 2005 ⁹	41	1

⁷ Wording 2005: If an employee contracted Avian flu through the course of his work, do you think that the employer should be held liable?

⁸ Wording 2003: "If an employee contracted SARS through the workplace, do you think that the employer should be held liable? [ROTATE POLES]"

⁹ Wording 2005: "As you may know, there is talk of Avian flu and its potential rise to pandemic proportions. Using a 100 point probability scale where 100 means that we will



H1N1

BDO Dunwoody Weekly CEO/Business Leader Poll by COMPAS in Canadian Business for Publication October 5, 2009

The following verbatims provide a nuanced sense of panel opinion:

It would be advisable to have a well coordinated contingency plan between the provinces and the federal government, with feds leading the way.

My guess is that H1N1 will be like a typical flu year but we still have to be prepared if that assumption is not correct. I have heard that the expected mortality will be less than from typical flu. BUT!!! The risk is that this flu hits otherwise healthy people (our young employees) and can be, for healthy people, MUCH worse for a few individuals than the usual flu. I have also heard that H1N1 is more contagious. I'm not expecting a disaster, but as employers we just have to do what we reasonably can to educate and minimize spread of illness, and to be prepared to deal with a large percent of absenteeism if it comes to that. It likely won't be we can't afford to bank on that.

A lot of mixed messages out there, from severe to little risk. Some stating that H1N1 will cause no more deaths than [the] normal flu. Conflicting reports of safety and effectiveness of all flu shots, very difficult to align with one opinion.

Ontario's Minister of Health was outstanding during SARS.

The H1N1 threat, though real, has been over blown.

There is so much conflicting information coming out on this topic that it makes it hard to work on a reaction plan. I don't think anybody really knows the possibility of this becoming a huge issue - at least no more than the common flu! Common sense must prevail!

There seems to be much talk on the threats an H1N1 pandemic flu could have on society when, at this stage,

definitely have a pandemic within two years and 0 definitely not, what is your estimate of its probability?"



H1N1

BDO Dunwoody Weekly CEO/Business Leader Poll by COMPAS in Canadian Business for Publication October 5, 2009

people should likely know where the strain originates, germination timelines from original contact, natural preventative measures available (if any) and generally more scientific data around H1N1.

This is one area that I definitely don't envy the various governments having to deal with. After the 'event' has passed, they will be accused of over-reacting or under-reacting and nothing in between. The biggest problem they face is that there is limited knowledge as to the potential virulence of a specific virus and there are conflicting opinions on what is known.

A pandemic will do more than affect a few key people in a few businesses. I'm not sure many North Americans can grasp what this could potentially do if wide spread sickness occurs.

I believe that all this pandemic info is garbage and a total waste of everybody's money and effort. How many died worldwide from SARS, less than 200? More people die in a single plane crash.

Statistical cost effectiveness in saving lives in pandemics is low. Believe the high funds spent could be better used combating cancer, where much research direction is questionable and 15 year survival of active cancers at diagnosis is only around 2%.

There would be no way to determine if the employee got the flu at work and if they did WSIB should kick in.

I think a lot of the hype has to do with the press making a great drama out of this flu. The government response to this is a result of covering their respective butts. In case there is an actual problem, they will have been seen to be proactive.

I guess we now have a name other than just the FLU. Every year 1500 people die of "just" the flu. Are we asking people to stay away from Canada just like SARS? Just STOP.



H1N1

BDO Dunwoody Weekly CEO/Business Leader Poll by COMPAS in Canadian Business for Publication October 5, 2009

This whole H1N1 "pandemic" is completely out of proportion. The World Health Organization initially overreacted and now continues to try to save face by suggesting that it could still permuted into something severe. Yes, and I suppose a large meteor or comet could also strike the earth!

It is my understanding that H1N1 is very contagious but not very dangerous - in fact much less dangerous than normal flu. I also hear that it is spreading which means it will spread more but if it isn't dangerous I think we should preserve our gunpowder (money, surplus capacity etc) for something dangerous. Are we diverting scarce resources to this by closing acute care hospital beds (they are closing them in Calgary)?

Until they are ready to enact true quarantines I doubt much what the Ministry of Health does will be of much use.

The H1N1 pandemic scare is overblown and the deaths resulting from this flu strain will no greater or less than the deaths from everyday flu which we mostly ignore.

My belief is the seriousness of the H1N1 virus is exaggerated by the media and will have only minor influence on economic productivity.

People should always be concerned with good hygiene. Blowing everything out of proportion helps no one - just use common sense.

I feel the risk at this point is totally overblown.

The only epidemic associated with H1N1 will be an epidemic of illness following the use of an untried vaccine. Remember 1976.

I think politics flows towards the economic benefit rather than the health benefit therefore the best decision for health is not always made.



Controlling these kinds of issues is the most meaningful role that government has in our lives. I hope they don't screw it up!

3.0 Methodology

The COMPAS web-survey of CEOs and leaders of small, medium, and large corporations was conducted September 28 – October 1, 2009. Respondents constitute an essentially hand-picked panel with a higher numerical representation of small and medium-sized firms.

Because of the small population of CEOs and business leaders from which the sample was drawn, the study can be considered more accurate than comparably sized general public studies. In studies of the general public, surveys of n=138 are deemed accurate to within approximate 8.4 percentage points 19 times out of 20. The principal and investigator on this study is Conrad Winn, Ph.D.

