

Hand sanitizers proposed for OC Transpo buses, Transitway stations

(Ottawa) Bay Ward Councillor Alex Cullen, Chair of the City's Transit Committee, will be carrying a proposal made by nursing student graduate Jenn St. Jean to have OC Transpo consider installing hand sanitizers on OC Transpo's buses and at Transitway Stations.

Said Ms. St. Jean, who accompanied Councillor Cullen at a media briefing today at City Hall: "There are over 300,000 people who use public transit in Ottawa daily, and are exposed to the coughs, sneezes and sniffles that others bring on board. A simple hand sanitizer would help reduce the spread of flues and colds in our community."

Councillor Cullen agreed, saying: "This is simple investment to make to help improve public health. You see hand sanitizers in shopping malls, at schools and in childcare centers. It is a simple, common sense solution when today we are worried about the spread of infectious disease."

Ms. St. Jean, a University of Ottawa/Algonquin College nursing student graduate now working at CHEO, introduced Councillor Cullen to the idea of hand sanitizers on buses at a Registered Nurses of Ontario breakfast earlier this year. Councillor Cullen undertook to bring the proposal to the City's Transit Committee if Ms. St. Jean would develop the concept. The matter will be discussed at the June 17, 2009 meeting of Transit Committee.

Currently the City's Public Health Department has a "Be a Germ Stopper" campaign encouraging hand hygiene (such as hand washing and the use of hand sanitizers) in order to stop the spread of infectious diseases. Some 197 elementary schools and 20 child care centers participate in Public Health's "Be a Germ Stopper" campaign.

OC Transpo has 1,020 buses and 38 Transitway stations, and on a daily basis carries some 300,000 passengers. In 2007 OC Transpo carried 95.6 million passengers.

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