

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS BUREAU FLU ADVISORY



VOLUNTEER UPDATE

September 4, 2009

Update on Massachusetts

As summer comes to an end, it's back to school time again in Massachusetts. Crowded hallways, classrooms, and dorms, make schools particularly vulnerable to flu transmission. This year, flu preparation is more important than ever.

To assist schools in their planning, this week the Department of Public Health sent an electronic toolkit to all superintendents and school administrators in the state outlining recommendations and guidelines for flu preparation. These materials can all be found on the DPH [website](#). Resources include [FAQ's for parents](#), a flu symptom checklist, and an educational poster to help parents teach children the importance of hand washing. If you're a parent, there's important information for you as well, so please take a moment to learn how to protect yourself and your child from the flu.

In response to rumors circulating that the Commonwealth of Massachusetts is planning to impose mandatory vaccinations as part of their response to the H1N1 (swine) flu pandemic, Commissioner Auerbach issued a [memorandum](#) unequivocally stating that DPH will not call for, or authorize, mandatory vaccination against the pandemic flu.

Seasonal Influenza Vaccine Still Available for Purchase

For information about vaccine distributors with seasonal influenza vaccine available for purchase, go to the National Influenza Vaccine Summit website at: http://www.preventinfluenza.org/ivats/ivats_09_10.xls

Influenza Surveillance and Reporting Information

As flu season approaches, the Massachusetts Department of Public Health influenza surveillance team wants to stress the importance of influenza surveillance and the role that providers play. Recent experience with novel H1N1 influenza has further reinforced the degree to which the department relies on surveillance to track influenza activity and monitor for important trends. In addition, surveillance acts as a mechanism to identify new strains and changing antiviral resistance patterns.

DPH is looking for providers who are interested in participating in the CDC's US Outpatient Influenza-like Illness Surveillance Network (ILINet)

This important program plays an integral role in statewide and national influenza surveillance and has become one of the most important indicators of influenza activity. In addition to aiding in the detection and surveillance of seasonal and pandemic influenza, providers participating in this program receive a weekly influenza activity report from DPH and will have a designated epidemiologist within the influenza team to contact with any influenza-related questions or concerns. Any providers that are interested in participating are encouraged to contact Molly Crockett, Influenza Surveillance Coordinator at Molly.Crockett@state.ma.us for more information or to enroll.

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With influenza season just around the corner, providers are also reminded that influenza cases confirmed by laboratory tests are required to be reported to DPH [105 CMR 300.100] To facilitate reporting, DPH recently revised the Rapid Influenza Diagnostic Testing Reporting Form, which should be used to report all positive influenza rapid test results. Results of Influenza viral cultures, RT-PCR, or fluorescent antibody tests should not be reported on this reporting form. These results should be faxed in your routine laboratory report format to ISIS at (617) 983-6813. The form can be requested by calling the epidemiology department at (617) 983 -6800.

In addition, DPH asks that providers report to their local board of health and DPH ((617) 983-6800 all significant cases and high-risk situations including:

- All deaths related to influenza, in children < 18 years of age and pregnant women
- Unusually severe cases of influenza
- Any confirmed or suspect cases of influenza with encephalopathy
- Clusters of influenza-like illness in children, pregnant women or adults
- Any lab-confirmed case (s) or cluster of influenza-like illness in long-term care facilities or other high-risk institutional settings
- Suspect avian influenza cases
- Cases/isolates demonstrating antiviral resistance

CDC Update

This week the CDC posted a number of new and updated resources on its website. Included are:

H1N1 ACIP Vaccination Recommendation Podcast
<http://www2a.cdc.gov/podcasts/player.asp?f=14197>

Updated Novel H1N1 Vaccination Planning Q&A
<http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/vaccination/statelocal/qa.htm>

2009 H1N1 Influenza Vaccine and Pregnant Women
http://www.cdc.gov/H1N1flu/vaccination/pregnant_qa.htm

CDC 2009 H1N1 Vaccination Campaign Planning Checklist
http://www.cdc.gov/H1N1flu/vaccination/statelocal/planning_checklist.htm

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Contact Us

MSAR

www.mass.gov/MSAR

msar@dph.state.ma.us

MEDICAL RESERVE CORPS OF MASSACHUSETTS

www.mamedicalreservecorps.org

rhecchio@mamedicalreservecorps.org

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