

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS BUREAU FLU ADVISORY

October 16, 2009

VOLUNTEER UPDATE



Update on Massachusetts

This week marks the official beginning of the 2009-2010 influenza season, as defined by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) for flu reporting purposes.

As we begin this new flu season, DPH would like to explain how states track and report flu activity; and how to interpret the data that's contained in the report posted each week. Flu activity in Massachusetts is tracked by measuring how many patients are reporting "influenza-like illness" (ILI) at a series of specially-designated doctor's offices across the state known as "flu sentinel sites". That data is translated each week into the "Percentage of ILI Visits" graph which appears as Figure 1 on the first page of the [Weekly Flu Report](#). On the ILI graph, 2009-2010 flu activity will be represented using a red line, with the two previous years of activity shown using different colored lines. For this first week, there is not a red line because it's the first week of activity. Next week, the red line will begin to appear tracking next week's flu activity against this week's.

Seasonal and H1N1 Vaccine

Five major vaccine manufacturers are producing influenza vaccine this year. They are currently producing vaccine for both seasonal and H1N1 flu in the same time period. This has never been done before; and therefore, some interruptions in the supply chain have resulted. Nonetheless, these manufacturers are working day and night to produce and ship the H1N1 and seasonal flu vaccines in ever-increasing quantities to communities across the state and country.

Vaccine and vaccine supplies are shipped directly from the manufacturer to the community-level provider, such as physician's offices, hospitals, community health centers, pharmacies, and local public health departments. All Massachusetts hospitals and community health centers, many pediatric care providers, and some obstetric care providers have been allocated small quantities of H1N1 vaccine. However, these quantities represent a very small percentage of the total amount of H1N1 vaccine DPH expects to receive this flu season. More vaccine is expected from the federal government each week to build on those quantities and expand that distribution.

There are a couple ways to monitor when vaccine is available in your community:

- Visit <http://flu.masspro.org>, to find out if there are any public flu clinics planned for your area, including vaccination clinics at supermarkets and chain pharmacies such as CVS, Walgreen's or Rite Aid. Public health and school-based H1N1 vaccination clinics are expected in November and December, and will be posted as they are scheduled.
- People who are in a [high-priority group](#) to get vaccinated should contact their health care provider to find out when they can schedule an appointment to get the H1N1 vaccine.

In addition, beginning this week, the CDC will post updated 2009 H1N1 vaccine supply and distribution data every Friday on their website.

<http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/vaccination/vaccinesupply.htm>

Please continue to go to the DPH's website at www.mass.gov/flu to receive the most up to date information and resources.

CDC Update

During the week of October 4-10, 2009, influenza activity continued to increase in the United States. Flu activity is now widespread. Nationwide, visits to doctors for influenza-like-illness increased over last week and are higher than expected for this time of year. In addition, flu-related hospitalizations and deaths are increasing as well, and are higher than expected.

This week, the CDC continued to post a number of new and updated resources on its website, <http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/>. Included are:

What You Should Know and Do this Flu Season If You Are 65 Years and Older
<http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/65andolder.htm>

Updated: Q & A 2009 H1N1 Influenza Vaccine
http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/vaccination/public/vaccination_qa_pub.htm

Q & A Allocation and Distribution: 2009 H1N1 Influenza Vaccine
http://www.cdc.gov/H1N1flu/vaccination/statelocal/centralized_distribution_qa.htm

Interim Guidance on Infection Control Measures for 2009 H1N1 Influenza in Healthcare Settings, Including Protection of Healthcare Personnel
http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/guidelines_infection_control.htm

Q & A about CDC's Interim Guidance on Infection Control Measures for 2009 H1N1 Influenza in Healthcare Settings, Including Protection of Healthcare Personnel
http://www.cdc.gov/H1N1flu/guidance/control_measures_qa.htm

Q & A Regarding Respiratory Protection for Preventing 2009 H1N1 Influenza Among Healthcare Personnel
http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/guidelines_infection_control_qa.htm

2009 H1N1 and Seasonal Flu Information for Rheumatology Health Professionals
http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/arthritis_clinicians.htm

2009 H1N1 and Seasonal Flu Information for People with Inflammatory Arthritis or Rheumatic Disease
<http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/arthritis.htm>

Interim Guidance for Influenza Surveillance: Prioritizing RT-PCR Testing in Laboratories
<http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/screening.htm>

2009 H1N1 and Seasonal Flu: What You Should Know About Flu Antiviral Drugs
http://www.cdc.gov/flu/freeresources/2009-10/pdf/Antiviral_H1N1_factsheet.pdf

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