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EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS BUREAU FLU ADVISORY

November 6, 2009

VOLUNTEER UPDATE



Update on Massachusetts

DPH continues to see a dramatic increase in the number of cases of Influenza-like illness (ILI) across the state. Therefore, it is more important than ever for everyone to follow [flu prevention and control measures](#).

Not surprisingly, many schools are seeing an increase of H1N1 flu circulating and parents are, understandably, concerned about their children getting sick. DPH is working with administrators and school nurses across the state to help them prevent the spread of the flu. Schools are actively taking steps to interrupt virus transmission. In addition, schools are screening all students for flu-like symptoms and are diligently monitoring absenteeism in both students and staff. The goal is to keep schools open and functioning as usual, however, DPH recognizes that on a case-by-case basis, some schools may need to consider closing. When making this decision, schools should take several factors into account including the extent to which ILI has impaired the school's ability to perform its educational functions. Thus, a higher than usual absentee rate does not necessarily mean that a school should close.

Parents are a key partner in the fight against the flu. If your child does have the flu and is showing a fever, please do not give them fever reducing medication and send them to school. Also, if your child does stay home from school, do not let them go to other places where they could spread the flu virus to other people, such as after school programs, the mall, or sporting events. If your child is not sick, they should go to school. Keeping your healthy child away from school will not help better protect them from the virus. Remember, if there is flu present in your school, this means that there is also flu in your community.

H1N1 Vaccine

DPH continues to receive three to four allocations of H1N1 vaccine a week in different formulations. All providers receiving vaccine must report back to DPH on a weekly basis. This allows DPH to track the number of doses administered. Providers may also refine requests for additional vaccine and ask for different formulations on the reporting form.

Questions about H1N1 vaccine registration, allocation or reporting should be directed to the DPH H1N1 Provider Help Desk.:

- Toll free at 888-578-5585
- 617-983-6898
- Email MDPHH1N1Registration@state.ma.us

Seasonal Vaccine

Some health care providers and other immunization providers are not currently able to obtain seasonal influenza vaccine. Physicians are reporting that this year demand for seasonal influenza vaccine appears to be substantially higher than last year. The CDC is working with manufacturers, states, and immunization providers to identify existing seasonal flu vaccine and get it to providers who can administer it to people who need and want it. Individuals should be encouraged to seek seasonal flu vaccine. It is early in the flu season and there is still time for people to get vaccinated to protect them from becoming ill.

Individuals can stay informed about the availability of seasonal and H1N1 flu vaccine in their community by keeping in touch with their health care provider and by visiting <http://flu.masspro.org>, a database of locations currently offering flu vaccines, searchable by zip code.

Reminder to Clinicians Regarding Influenza Reporting

DPH asks that clinicians immediately report the following influenza-related cases by phone to the

Division of Epidemiology and Immunization (617) 983-6800 and to your local board of health. This list applies to all strains of influenza.

- Deaths related to influenza in children under 18 and in pregnant women
- ICU admissions of pregnant women with influenza
- Unusually severe cases of suspect or confirmed influenza
- Confirmed cases of influenza with encephalopathy, myocarditis, or pericarditis
- Clusters of influenza-like illness (ILI) in children, pregnant women, or adults
- Case(s) or clusters of ILI in long-term care facilities or in high risk settings
- Cases of antiviral treatment or prophylaxis failure, begun within 48 hrs of symptom onset
- Suspect novel influenza, typically travel-associated (e.g., avian influenza)

Please call DPH at (617) 983-6801 to obtain a copy of the *Influenza and ILI Significant Case Reporting Form*; reports can then be submitted via fax to DPH at (617) 983-6220.

Influenza Report

As of November 5, 2009, 1555 confirmed cases of H1N1 have been reported throughout Massachusetts since April of 2009. School-aged individuals (5-18 years) continue to be primarily affected by H1N1, with over 62% of cases age 18 or younger. The median age of cases is 14 and cases range from 0 to 92 years. To date, males and females have been equally impacted by H1N1. [Click here to read the complete report.](#)

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 25-31, 2009, influenza activity remained high in the United States. Flu activity is widespread in 48 states. Nationally, visits to doctors for influenza-like-illness declined slightly from last week, but are still very high. Flu-related hospitalizations and deaths continue to increase and are very high nation-wide compared to what is expected for this time of year.

Beginning this week, the CDC is providing [updated 2009 H1N1 vaccine supply and distribution data](#) daily at around 12:00pm on their website.

In addition, the CDC posted a number of new and updated resources on its website, <http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/>. Included are:

Letter about Vaccine Supply from CDC Director to State Health Officials
<http://www.cdc.gov/media/pdf/Final-H1N1-Letter-to-State-Officials--CDC-Director.pdf>

Updated: Q & A 2009 H1N1 Flu ("Swine Flu") and You
Includes three influenza videos & information on H1N1 in pets
<http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/qa.htm>

Updated: Antiviral Safety Information
http://www.cdc.gov/H1N1flu/antivirals/safety_info.htm

Q & A Regarding 2009 H1N1 Influenza Vaccine Supply
http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/vaccination/qa_vac_supply.htm

Monovalent Influenza Vaccine Dosage, Administration, and Storage
<http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/vaccination/dosage.htm>

2009 H1N1 Influenza: Resources for Pharmacists
<http://www.cdc.gov/H1N1flu/pharmacist/>

Fact Sheet: Guillain-Barré Syndrome (GBS)
http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/vaccination/factsheet_gbs.htm

CMS Guidance Documents on H1N1

http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/vaccination/pdf/List_of_Annotated_CMS_Links_102609_rev.pdf

CDC Interim Guidance for Workers Employed at Commercial Swine Farms

http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/guidelines_commerical_settings_with_pigs.htm

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