

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS BUREAU FLU ADVISORY

November 20, 2009

VOLUNTEER UPDATE

Please note: Due to the Thanksgiving holiday the next regular Flu Advisory will be distributed on December 4, 2009. If there is any vital information or guidance released before then, a Special Advisory will be issued.



Update on Massachusetts

This week, DPH posted several updated guidance documents on its flu page. Included are [Guidelines for Infection Control in Healthcare Settings](#), [Exclusion of Health Care Workers with Influenza](#) and [Guidance for Schools Facing High Absenteeism due to Influenza-Like-Illness \(ILI\)](#).

In addition, Commissioner Auerbach and DPH Medical Director, Lauren Smith, MD, appeared on a special addition of Hopkinton Community Television's "Physician Focus" entitled "The Flu: What You Should Know." The Commissioner and Dr. Smith joined Erin Tracy, M.D., an obstetrician-gynecologist at Massachusetts General Hospital and Vice Chair of the Massachusetts Section of the American Congress of Obstetricians and Gynecologists to discuss important flu related topics including the difference between H1N1 (swine) flu and seasonal flu, vaccine safety and supply, how to protect against infections, and what to do if you get sick. "Physician Focus" is the Massachusetts Medical Society's monthly educational program. It is distributed to local public access television stations across the Commonwealth. The program is available for viewing online at <http://www.hcam.tv/series/physicianfocus/flu/index.shtml>.

As of November 19, 2009, 1768 confirmed cases of H1N1 have been reported throughout Massachusetts since April of 2009. Although ILI activity seems to have peaked and is on a decline, activity is still at a level that is significantly higher than what was seen at the same time during the last two years. To read this week's complete influenza report [click here](#).

H1N1 Vaccine

To date, the state has received just over 1 million doses of the H1N1 vaccine. This is still less than one third of the total amount of vaccine DPH ordered and much more is needed to fully address the current need. According to the latest projections from the federal government, Massachusetts will see a significant increase in the volume of doses in our vaccine shipments by the second week in December.

Most of the vaccine has been sent to clinical settings. But because there are thousands of clinical settings that share these shipments, none of them have received enough. In general, the size of the shipment that a clinical site receives each week is a reflection of the number of patients in the targeted priority groups that it cares for. However, this varies somewhat based upon the type of vaccine that becomes available each week. For instance, pregnant women are unable to receive nasal flu vaccine sprays. Therefore, if the only vaccine received in a shipment is the nasal spray, DPH cannot send that new quantity to obstetrical practices. The nasal vaccine can however, be administered to healthy children, and would therefore be sent to

pediatricians. Regrettably, given the changeability of the production processes DPH is not given advance notice of the amounts or formulations of vaccine ahead of time. This makes it very difficult for clinical practices to plan ahead or to notify their patients of what to expect.

In addition to clinical practices, a smaller quantity of vaccine has been shipped to local public health departments for community-level public clinics, some of which are school-based. DPH will continue to distribute the vaccine to providers as soon as it becomes available and provide you with the most up to date information on the situation.

Individuals should continue to 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>.

Providers with questions about H1N1 vaccine registration, allocation or reporting should contact the DPH H1N1 Provider Help Desk:

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

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

DPH Warns Public about H1N1 Cleaning Scams

This flu season it is important to keep "high touch" surfaces like doorknobs, phones and toys clean. Flu viruses, including the H1N1 virus, can survive on these surfaces for several hours. However, once the wet droplets are completely dry, the virus is no longer infectious. If someone you live, work, or go to school with is sick with the flu, it is especially important to keep all communal surfaces clean.

However, ***there is no need to utilize industrial sanitization measures or specialty cleaning crews***. Any person or company that charges for services to "sanitize" your home or office against H1N1 is simply taking advantage of the current H1N1 flu situation and preying upon fears. There is no magic chemical that kills flu viruses. Regular household cleaners are sufficient. In addition, it is not necessary to separately clean linens, eating utensils, or dishes belonging to those who are sick; however, do not share these items without first washing them thoroughly.

CDC Update

During the week of November 8-14, 2009, influenza activity decreased, but overall remained very high for this time of year. Flu activity is widespread in 43 states. Nationally, visits to doctors for influenza-like-illness declined from last week, but are still higher than expected for this time of year. Flu-related hospitalizations and deaths have declined slightly, but are still very high nation-wide compared to what is expected for this time of year.

The CDC provides [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 this week are:

Vaccine Information for Clinicians and Health Care Professionals

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

Information for Vaccine Planners

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

Letter to Providers Promoting PPSV for Adults

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

Q & A: 2009 H1N1 and Pneumococcal Disease in the News

http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/vaccination/qa_pneumococcal_disease.htm

2009 H1N1 Flu Information for People with Disabilities and Their Caregivers

<http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/disabilities/>

Updated: Emergency Use Authorization of Peramivir IV-For Health Care Providers

<http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/eua/peramivir.htm>

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