

EMERGENCY PREPAREDNESS BUREAU FLU ADVISORY

December 4, 2009

VOLUNTEER UPDATE



Update on Massachusetts

H1N1 Activity

Massachusetts continues to see a decline in the number of people reporting influenza-like illness (ILI) in the state. While DPH is encouraged by these new numbers, there is no way of knowing if this downtrend will continue. Although some of the numbers make it seem that the H1N1 flu season has peaked, it is simply too soon to know if it is actually on the decline in Massachusetts. Every influenza pandemic is unique so only time will tell if these downturns will continue. In the meantime, it is more important than ever that everyone continue to practice good health hygiene to help prevent getting or spreading the flu.

As of December 3, 2009, 1867 confirmed cases of H1N1 have been reported throughout Massachusetts since April of 2009. Although ILI activity has declined over the past few weeks, the percentage of ILI visits being reported remains higher than what was seen during the two previous seasons of influenza. To read this week's complete influenza report [click here](#).

H1N1 Vaccine

So far this flu season, the limited quantities of H1N1 vaccine available in the state have been reserved for people at especially high risk for flu, including pregnant women, children, caregivers of infants and healthcare workers with direct patient contact. The state is also starting to provide vaccine for people up to the age of 64 with underlying health conditions that put them at particular risk for complications of influenza. This will occur in two ways: 1) by providing vaccine to clinical sites who serve people at very high risk due to their medical conditions, and 2) by allowing local public health officials to vaccinate adults with underlying health conditions— if they feel they have adequately vaccinated the original target groups of pregnant women, children and front-line health care workers.

The best ways to stay informed about the availability of H1N1 vaccine in your community are:

- Visit <http://flu.masspro.org> to search for a public clinic near you
- Stay in touch with your health care provider
- Contact your local public health department and/or local community health center to see if they know when and where clinics will take place in your area

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

Updated: Guidelines for Infection Control in Healthcare Settings

DPH has added an addendum to their infection control guidelines concerning nasopharyngeal swabs and precautions to be taken by vaccinated healthcare workers. The amended recommendations can be accessed [here](#).

Fraudulent Email Alert

The CDC has received reports of fraudulent emails (phishing) referencing a CDC sponsored State Vaccination Program. The messages request that users must create a personal H1N1 (swine flu) Vaccination Profile on the cdc.gov website. The message then states that anyone that has reached the age of 18 has to have his/her personal Vaccination Profile on the cdc.gov site. The CDC has NOT implemented a state vaccination program requiring registration on www.cdc.gov. Users that click on the email are at risk of having malicious code installed on their system. CDC reminds users to take the following steps to reduce the risk of being a victim of a phishing attack:

- Do not follow unsolicited links and do not open or respond to unsolicited email messages.
- Use caution when visiting un-trusted websites.
- Use caution when entering personal information online.

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 November 22-28, 2009, influenza activity decreased across all key indicators over the previous week, but most indicators remain higher than normal for this time of year. The number of states reporting widespread flu activity decreased from 32 to 25 and visits to doctors for influenza-like illness declined nationally from the previous week. In addition, flu-related hospitalizations and deaths continue to decline, but remain high 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 are:

New Podcast: 2009 H1N1 Information for Parents who have Children with High-Risk Medical Conditions

<http://www2.cdc.gov/podcasts/player.asp?f=393367>

New: Quick Facts for the Public on Antiviral Treatments for 2009 H1N1

<http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/antivirals/quickfacts.htm>

Q & A: Opening and Mixing Tamiflu® Capsules with Liquids if Child Cannot Swallow Capsules

http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/antivirals/mixing_tamiflu_ga.htm

Preparing for the Flu: A Communication Toolkit for Schools (Grades K-12)

<http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/schools/toolkit/>

New: Information about the 2009 H1N1 Virus

http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/information_h1n1_virus.htm

New: CDC Guidance for Emergency Shelters for the 2009-2010 Flu Season
<http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/guidance/emergencyselters.htm>

New: Q & A about CDC's Guidance for Emergency Shelters for the 2009-2010 Flu Season
http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/guidance/emergencyselters_qa.htm

Updated: H1N1 Flu (Swine Flu): Easy-to-use Software Preparedness Tools for Professionals
<http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/tools/>

Updated: 2009 H1N1 Influenza: Resources for Pharmacists
<http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/pharmacist/>

Updated: Interim Guidance for Management of ILI aboard Commercial Aircraft during the 2009-10 Influenza Season
<http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/guidance/air-crew-dom-intl.htm>

Updated: Q & A on 2009 H1N1 Vaccine Financing
http://www.cdc.gov/H1N1flu/vaccination/statelocal/vaccine_financing.htm

Updated: 2009 H1N1 Monovalent Influenza Vaccine Dosage, Administration, and Storage
<http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/vaccination/dosage.htm>

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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