

MaineHealth

Weekly H1N1 Update Newsletter
October 2, 2009

Welcome to the MaineHealth H1N1 Weekly Update Newsletter
A Publication of the MaineHealth H1N1 Workgroup

About this Newsletter:

This publication will be released each Friday morning throughout the fall and early winter to assist healthcare providers and infection prevention specialists in preparing for the effects of the H1N1 virus on the Maine population.

Each issue will contain:

- Updates from national and state-wide public health organizations
- Timely information related to workforce and target population vaccinations
- Supply considerations

If you have additional questions or suggestions for this newsletter, please feel free to contact the publisher.

In This Issue:

- Maine CDC Update
- Information for Health Care Workers
- Regional Event Announcement
- Vaccine Coordinator's Contact Information

Quick Hits:

- **The live, attenuated form of the H1N1 vaccine is anticipated to arrive in Maine next week (October 5th – 9th).**
- **The *live, attenuated* form of the H1N1 vaccine is NOT indicated for pregnant women.**
- **Maine CDC expects seasonal flu vaccine to arrive in late October.**

For more information regarding these important points, please review the Maine CDC Update update below.

Maine CDC Update:

The US CDC reports that flu activity continued to increase in the US during the week of Sept. 13-19th. Widespread influenza activity continues in much of the southern parts of the country, including higher than expected hospitalizations for this time of year. Outpatient visits for influenza-like-illness (ILI) increased in much of New England.

Similarly, in Maine, visits to outpatient office settings and hospital emergency departments for ILI continued to increase this past week.

- **Maine CDC is working with:**

1.) **Clinicians who provide health care for pregnant women to assure they have H1N1 vaccine for their patients and themselves as soon as it arrives in Maine.** On 9/17/09 US CDC updated its Interim Recommendations for Obstetric Health Care Providers: www.cdc.gov/H1N1flu/pregnancy/antiviral_messages.htm. Please note that the *live, attenuated* form of the H1N1 vaccine is NOT indicated for pregnant women.

2.) **The Regional Resource Centers at Eastern Maine Medical Center, Central Maine Medical Center, and Maine Medical Center, to assure that all health care providers and Emergency Medical Services personnel (EMS) are offered H1N1 vaccine during the first few weeks of its arrival.** The live attenuated intranasal vaccine (LAIV) will be shipped primarily to pediatric health care providers for healthy toddlers, and household contacts and caregivers of young infants.

3.) **The Maine Department of Education (DOE) to assure that all Maine children are offered seasonal (regular) and H1N1 vaccine in local schools.** There continue to be delays in receiving seasonal influenza vaccine in Maine, especially pediatric influenza vaccine for large scale clinics. Maine CDC expects seasonal flu vaccine to arrive in late October. Schools and other settings that have planned large scale clinics with this vaccine should postpone these clinics until early November if they have not yet received vaccine. They should be able to offer H1N1 vaccine concurrently at these clinics.

- The Maine CDC will be holding a **conference call for all interested stakeholders on H1N1 vaccine efforts** from 12:00-1:00 p.m. on Monday Oct. 5th. The call-in number is 1-800-914-3396, pass code 473623.
- There continue to be delays in Maine in receiving the seasonal flu vaccine, especially pediatric formulations. Despite the Maine CDC recommendation to delay large scale flu clinics until later this fall, the CDC is still recommending that all health care providers continue to vaccinate patients with seasonal influenza vaccine during routine visits and in scheduled clinics **as supply allows**.

- Good news! Preliminary studies show that the **safety profiles for H1N1 vaccine are consistent with seasonal flu studies**. To date, there have been few side effects noted. All of the current H1N1 formulations are FDA approved and the manufacturers of these vaccines are using the same process as is used for seasonal influenza vaccine.

Information for Health Care Workers:

- The Maine CDC has developed a **health care provider tool kit** which is now available at <http://www.maine.gov/dhhs/boh/maineflu/h1n1/hc-providers/index.shtml>. The tool kit includes general H1N1 information, frequently asked questions, the Governor's Declaration, billing information, and guidelines for maintenance, storage and transport of the vaccine.
- **H1N1 influenza vaccine will only be available through Maine CDC/DHHS in Maine, and will not be available for private purchase from manufacturers.** Those interested in offering H1N1 vaccine **must complete and submit the H1N1 Provider Agreement** (even if already registered as a Maine Immunization Program provider). Additional information regarding this can be found at www.maine.gov/dhhs/boh/maineflu/h1n1/hc-providers/index.shtml. Please note that not all provider sites that register will be chosen as distribution sites. **The Maine CDC is currently deciding which sites will be designated distribution sites**, and will be relying on those sites to work collaboratively with other provider sites in their communities to **redistribute** the H1N1 vaccine as appropriate. The CDC-designated Vaccine Coordinators for each district will work in those communities to help facilitate this process once the final provider distribution list has been selected.
- A common question health care organizations have is **"What is the definition of health care personnel for the purposes of prioritizing the H1N1 vaccine?"**
 - ◆ The US CDC defines health care personnel (HCP) as "all paid and unpaid persons working in health-care settings who have the potential for exposure to patients with influenza, infectious materials, including body substances, contaminated medical supplies and equipment, or contaminated environmental surfaces."
 - ◆ HCP might include (but are not limited to) physicians, nurses, nursing assistants, therapists, technicians, emergency medical service personnel, dental personnel, pharmacists, laboratory personnel, autopsy personnel, students and trainees, contractual staff not employed by the health-care facility, and persons (e.g., clerical, dietary, housekeeping, maintenance, and volunteers) not directly involved in patient care, but potentially exposed to infectious agents that can be transmitted to and from HCP.
 - ◆ Emergency medical services personnel might include "persons in an occupation (e.g., emergency medical technicians and fire fighters) who provide emergency medical care as part of their normal job duties."

- ◆ Health care settings would include, but are not limited to: acute-care hospitals, nursing homes, skilled nursing facilities, physicians' offices, urgent care centers, and outpatient clinics, and to persons who provide home health care and emergency medical services.
- For a complete **overview of H1N1 recommendations from the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) of the US CDC**, please view the Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report, "Use of Influenza A (H1N1) 2009" by clicking here: (<http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/PDF/rr/rr5810.pdf>).
- **Additional resources for health care providers:** Please note the new email addresses (below) for Maine H1N1 issues. These do not replace, but rather supplement the public hotline (888-257-0990, M-F 9-5) and the disease reporting and emergency consultation hotline (800-821-5821 24hr/7d). There is also a new healthcare provider/clinician FAQ for common questions to these addresses and hotlines, available at: <http://www.maine.gov/dhhs/boh/maineflu/h1n1/provider-faq.shtml>.

Regional Event Announcement:

The Southern Maine Regional Resource Center (SMRRC) is hosting a "Southern Maine Regional Influenza Preparedness and Response Meeting" on October 7, 2009, 10:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m. at the Hilton Garden Inn in Freeport, ME. This meeting targets healthcare and EMS professionals in decision-making positions within their organizations around seasonal and H1N1 influenza. **This event is specific to the Southern Maine Region, inclusive of York, Cumberland, Sagadahoc, and Lincoln Counties.** Registration information and agenda will be available soon at: <http://www.smrrc.org/>.

Vaccine Coordinators' Contact Information:

Vaccine Coordinators have been appointed for each Public Health District in Maine. Vaccine Coordinators will be one component of **district leadership teams**, which also include staff from the three Regional Resource Centers for Public Health Emergency Preparedness and Emergency Management Agencies.

- District 1 – York: Sharon Leahy-Lind, 490-4625
- District 2 – Cumberland: Meredith Tipton, 592-5631
- District 3 – Western Maine: MaryAnn Amrich, 753-9103
(Franklin, Oxford, and Androscoggin counties)
- District 4 – Mid Coast: Jen Gunderman-King, 596-4278
(Waldo, Knox, Lincoln, and Sagadahoc counties)
- District 5 – Central Maine: Sue Lee, 592-5634
(Somerset and Kennebec counties)

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