



FEDERAL OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH UPDATE ON 2009 H1N1 FLU AND VACCINE

JANUARY 8, 2010

Influenza Illness Continues to Decrease

Incidence of influenza-like illness continues to decrease in most regions of the United States, with only four states reporting widespread outbreaks during recent weeks. However, flu season is very unpredictable and can last until May. From April 2009 until mid-November 2009, H1N1 flu has already infected approximately 47 million Americans and contributed to more than 200,000 hospitalizations and nearly 10,000 deaths -- mostly among children and young adults. It is possible that a third wave of either seasonal or H1N1 could come later this winter, when influenza most often hits hardest. So it is important to continue to encourage vaccination among all employees to prevent more disease and death.

Vaccine Supply Continues to Increase

FOH continues to order and receive weekly allocations of 2009 H1N1 vaccine from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Doses have increased substantially in recent weeks and all sites are now offering the flu vaccine to the general population, with a continued focus on target populations at highest risk for infection or complications from the flu. Sites are also planning outreach or offsite vaccine programs as supplies and staffing permit. Our overarching goal remains to vaccinate as many people as quickly as possible.

National Influenza Vaccine Week

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) and the CDC announced that January 10 – 16, 2010 is **National Influenza Vaccination Week (NIVW)** -- a nationwide effort to encourage more Americans to get the H1N1 vaccine. With vaccine supply more plentiful than ever, we encourage federal agencies to use **National Influenza Vaccination Week** as an opportunity to promote vaccination among all employees, but especially to those at increased risk. Visit http://www.cdc.gov/flu/freeresources/additional_print.htm#nivw for a variety of print and other materials you can use to publicize events at your location.

Vaccination of Federal Contractors

Federal Occupational Health has received numerous inquiries from agencies regarding its ability to provide H1N1 vaccine to federal contractors and has in turn sought an opinion from the HHS Office of General Counsel (OGC). The OGC has recently determined that FOH can provide this service to *“contractors who are co-located or have substantial interaction with other federal employees”*. FOH customer agency points of contact will receive information within the next week about how to incorporate vaccine to contractors and estimated costs under our existing interagency agreement. However, since HHS OGC only has jurisdiction within its department, we strongly suggest that you obtain similar guidance within your agency prior to requesting these services.