

# West Virginia Department of Health and Human Resources

## H1N1 Communication Points

### Flu Vaccines this Season

August 26, 2009

The following key communication points are provided to assist you with media contact and to ensure consistent messaging.

- The 2009-2010 flu season has the potential to be a challenging one because we will be dealing with the normal seasonal flu and novel H1N1 (swine ) flu. That means two vaccines are being recommended.
- While the majority of people infected with seasonal or H1N1 flu recover well, serious complications can occur with each. We know that seasonal influenza is responsible each year for approximately 200,000 hospitalizations and 36,000 deaths in the US. With H1N1 we have also seen hospitalizations and death. H1N1 has been responsible for over 7,000 hospitalizations in the United States and over 500 deaths. Fortunately, there have been no deaths in West Virginia directly related to H1N1 to date, but it would not be surprising to see this occur. We are seeing some hospitalizations.
- In the Southern Hemisphere where it is currently winter, there has been increased cases of H1N1 and Seasonal flu. We expect that to be the case here.
- Vaccines are the most powerful public health tool for control of influenza, and the U.S. government is working closely with manufacturers to get the H1N1 vaccine out this fall.
- The H1N1 vaccine could be available as early mid-October. Seasonal flu vaccine will be available earlier than H1N1 vaccine this fall. Individuals are being encouraged to get both a seasonal and H1N1 shot to be fully protected.
- We expect the seasonal vaccine to be available earlier than the H1N1 vaccine. The usual seasonal influenza viruses are still expected to cause illness this fall and winter. Individuals are encouraged to get their seasonal flu vaccine as soon as it is available.
- CDC's Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) has recommended that pregnant women, people who live with or care for

children younger than 6 months of age, healthcare and emergency medical services personnel, persons between the ages of 6 months and 24 years old, and people ages of 25 through 64 years of age who are at higher risk for novel H1N1 because of chronic health conditions or compromised immune systems get the H1N1 vaccine when it is available first. If supply is initially limited, some modifications in this listing may occur.

- Over time, it is expected that enough H1N1 vaccine will be available for anyone who wants to reduce their risk of this disease.
- Every state is developing a vaccine delivery plan. Here in West Virginia, H1N1 vaccine is anticipated to be available in a combination of settings such as vaccination clinics organized by local health departments, participating healthcare provider offices, schools, universities, retail food and drug and other settings. This is an ongoing process.
- The H1N1 vaccine is being made using the same processes used for manufacturing seasonal flu. We anticipate that a Vaccine Information Statement or VIS for the H1N1 flu vaccine will be made available soon for the public to review once more information about the new vaccine is available. The VIS explains the reason for the shot, any known side effects and how to report a vaccine injury. The 2009-2010 seasonal flu VIS are now posted on [www.wvimmunization.org](http://www.wvimmunization.org). We expect the H1N1 VIS soon.
- Two doses of H1N1 vaccine spaced 3-4 weeks apart is expected to be recommended to provide protection against the H1N1 virus. This is typical with new flu vaccines. Whether or not a second dose is needed will be known when results of clinical trials become available.
- **Additional information is available on the West Virginia Department of Health and Human Resources website at [www.wvdhhr.org](http://www.wvdhhr.org) or by visiting the CDC website at [www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/](http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/)**