



For more information contact:  
Toby D. Wagoner  
West Virginia Immunization Program  
Telephone: (304) 558-6438

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### **Seasonal Flu Vaccine Shortages Clarified**

State health officials are responding to concerns raised by the public and healthcare providers that seasonal flu vaccine is not readily available locally by sharing what is known about the national situation. Some seasonal flu vaccine is expected to flow in the weeks to come.

This year, 114 million doses of seasonal flu vaccine are expected to be available – the same number of flu vaccines used last year. This is only slightly below projections for this season's supply (118 million doses). Healthcare providers had expected to receive the seasonal flu vaccine early this year, ahead of the H1N1 (swine flu) vaccine. Many did and rapidly used the supply they received. However, some of the vaccine manufacturers had slightly decreased yields or experienced difficulty in distributing their vaccine. This caused some orders to be canceled or delayed and some seasonal flu shipments to be reduced prior to shipment. There is also some evidence that demand for seasonal flu vaccine has been higher than usual.

State Health Officer Dr. Cathy Slemp, who is leading the H1N1 vaccination efforts in West Virginia, said "We certainly understand and share the public's concern over the current focal shortages of seasonal flu vaccine. While manufactured supply is no less this year than prior years, more people have likely been interested in its use and have gotten the vaccine. That is the good news. While approximately 75 percent of this year's supply has already been sent out by manufacturers, approximately 25 percent is still scheduled to arrive in healthcare provider offices and communities between now and the end of November." Dr. Slemp added, "We're not seeing seasonal flu viruses circulate in West Virginia at this point – all circulating flu virus is currently H1N1. In West Virginia we typically do not see much seasonal flu circulation until December – January, meaning there is still time for folks to be vaccinated and be protected from seasonal flu." Any provider, who has more seasonal flu vaccine than they anticipate using, is encouraged to work with their local health department to identify other providers for the vaccine. Individuals needing a seasonal flu shot may contact their local health department regarding the availability of seasonal flu vaccine in their community or go to [www.flucliniclocator.org](http://www.flucliniclocator.org).

For more information on seasonal or H1N1 flu vaccines go online to [www.wvflu.org](http://www.wvflu.org), [www.wvdhhr.org](http://www.wvdhhr.org), or [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov) .