

THIS IS AN OFFICIAL WEST VIRGINIA HEALTH UPDATE NUMBER WV0002

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WEST VIRGINIA FLU SUPPLY VACCINE UPDATE

TO: West Virginia Local Health Departments, Physicians, Hospitals, Health Care Professional Organization and Societies and Other Health Care Professionals

FROM: Cathy Slemm, M.D., M.P.H., Acting State Health Officer, West Virginia Department of Health and Human Resources, Bureau for Public Health

DATE: OCTOBER 20, 2004

LOCAL HEALTH DEPARTMENTS: PLEASE DISTRIBUTE TO COMMUNITY VACCINE PROVIDERS, HEALTH CARE FACILITIES, AND OTHER APPLICABLE PARTNERS

OTHER RECIPIENTS: PLEASE DISTRIBUTE TO ASSOCIATION MEMBERSHIP, STAFF, ETC.

The West Virginia Bureau for Public Health (WVBPH) has learned that additional flu vaccine will be shipped to some health care provider offices and facilities in West Virginia over the next several weeks. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recently announced that initial shipments of the nation's remaining flu vaccine had been sent to facilities serving those at highest risk. More will be shipped out over the next 6-7 weeks. Vaccine being shipped is the remaining Aventis Pasteur vaccine product. No new vaccine supplies nationally have been identified.

To date, WVBPH has not been given specifics as to how much additional vaccine has been, or is expected to be, shipped over the next few weeks to WV providers, facilities or public health agencies serving high risk groups. **Although not yet in hand, WVBPH does expect to receive its full vaccine order under the Vaccine for Children Program.**

Health care providers that had Chiron's Fluvirin on order should not assume they are **not** getting influenza vaccine. Per CDC, Chiron is sharing provider ordering information with Aventis, and Aventis is working with CDC to **provide at least some Aventis Fluzone product to selected providers who ordered Chiron product and serve high risk populations.** At present, neither CDC nor Aventis could provide any WV specifics on this part of the effort.

Late last week, Aventis Pasteur shipped more than 2 million doses of influenza vaccine throughout the country to health care providers who serve designated high-priority groups for the 2004-05 season Prevention. More doses of vaccine will be going out over the next six to seven weeks. The initial shipment of remaining vaccine went to:

- Veterans Administration
- Long-term care facilities/acute care hospitals
- State public health officials
- Vaccines for Children Program
- Private providers who care for young children

For the 2004-2005 influenza season, Aventis Pasteur produced 55.4 million doses of vaccine. Before the Chiron announcement on October 5, 2004, approximately 33 million doses had already been shipped to pediatricians, primary care and other office-based physicians, as well as to public health providers. Current shipments of vaccine are the remaining Aventis Pasteur product.

Anyone with first-hand knowledge about price-gouging for flu vaccine should contact the West Virginia Attorney General's Office toll-free at 800-368-8808 or the West Immunization Program at 1-800-642-3634.

As remaining vaccine becomes available, WV health care providers, both public and private, are encouraged to work together to link high risk groups with vaccine supply. All available vaccine should be used for priority groups listed below (per Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices Guidance, October 5, 2004):

- All children aged 6-23 months
- Adults aged 65 years and older
- Persons aged 2-64 years with underlying chronic medical conditions
- All women who will be pregnant during influenza season
- Residents of nursing homes and long-term care facilities
- Children 6 months-18 years of age on chronic aspirin therapy
- Health-care workers with direct patient care
- Out-of-home caregivers and household contacts of children aged <6 months.

In addition, as with every flu season, health care facilities should examine and update their plans for handling increased numbers of patients with flu (identification of surge capacity beds, enhanced staffing plans, infection control policies, etc.). Hospitals and others are reminded of their participation in emergency response planning efforts over the past two years with Regional Healthcare System Planning Groups. These Regional Planning Groups are encouraged to examine how their surge capacity plans, as well as plans for mutual aid, can apply to influenza season.

WVBPH is taking the following actions to support WV health care providers, facilities, and residents this influenza season:

- Working with Local Health Departments and Providers to track currently available vaccine supplies in communities (now and over time) in order to distribute future state shipments of vaccine in as equitable a method as possible.
 - Helping most Local Health Departments serve as flu vaccine information referral centers in their communities -- working to link high risk groups with available vaccine.
- Please note, the participation of all health care providers in tracking vaccine availability (via fax back form) and in accepting referrals wherever possible, will be critical for this to be successful in your community.**

- Providing patient education materials on the current flu vaccine shortage and other ways of preventing influenza. See website at www.wvdhhr.org/immunizations.
- Providing a vaccine recipient self screening form. See website at www.wvdhhr.org/immunizations.
- Continuing to support the participation of hospitals and other health care facilities in Regional Healthcare System Emergency Response Planning around the issue of surge capacity. (begun in 2003)
- Providing up to date, WV specific influenza surveillance data on line. See website at www.wvdhhr.org/immunizations.

Influenza season typically begins in WV in December and peaks in mid winter. Because each season is unpredictable, it is not known how severe the 2004-2005 season will be. Besides vaccine, state residents, including all health care providers, should take other practical steps to help prevent spread of flu. These include staying home from work, school, and other gatherings when you are sick; covering your mouth and nose when coughing or sneezing; and practicing frequent and thorough hand washing with soap and water or waterless handwashing agents.

For more information about the flu and this year's recommendations, visit the CDC Website: <http://www.cdc.gov/flu> and the WV Immunization Program website at www.wvdhhr.org/Immunizations/. For more information, please contact your local health department or the West Virginia Immunization Program at 304/558-2188, toll-free: 1-800-642-3634.

##This Message was distributed to Local Health Departments, Professional Societies (e.g., APIC, AAP, AAFP, ACP, WVHCA, WVHA), WVDHHR Disaster Network and Health Care Providers via WVMI##

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