



FLU VACCINE NOW AVAILABLE WITHOUT FINANCIAL RISK

ELIGIBILITY RESTRICTIONS ON REMAINING FLU VACCINE LIFTED

TO: West Virginia Local Health Departments, Health Care Providers, Health Care Facilities, Health Professional Organizations and Other Health Partners

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

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

The purpose of this advisory is to notify public and private vaccine providers that the WV Bureau for Public Health (BPH) is now lifting restrictions for use of remaining influenza vaccine. In addition it provides information on how to access additional vaccine (without financial risk) for continued use into the season. **Vaccinating those at high risk remains the priority, but vaccine should no longer be held if demand is not present and supply remains. Influenza and its complications can still be prevented by vaccinating additional individuals well into the influenza season.** Remaining doses or newly acquired vaccine should now be used based on local priorities and needs. Individual providers and agencies may opt not to expand eligibility if demand is still being seen from those at high risk of influenza and its complications.

A BPH survey of local health departments showed that few high risk individuals are still seeking vaccine, although many likely remain unvaccinated. BPH encourages these individuals to still seek vaccine and providers to still vaccinate them. At present, the majority of public sector vaccine within WV has been used, although a few doses remain. BPH will work with local health departments and private, nonprofit providers to redistribute this remaining public supply among public entities for use in meeting local priorities and needs. In addition, **Flu vaccine from the CDC stockpile is now being made available to private or public providers for purchase with no financial risk. This vaccine can be purchased directly from Sanofi Pasteur (formerly Aventis Pasteur) by calling 1-800-VACCINE or through distributors.** All vaccine purchased after 1/27/05 has a "return policy", allowing providers to receive credit upon return of any unused product. (Providers should be responsible only for return shipping costs).

NEEDED ACTION

Continue encouraging vaccination throughout the season—into February and beyond.

WV influenza activity has increased, but remains sporadic. Some states are now starting to see widespread activity. Flu activity typically peaks in February in West Virginia and continues into March or April; so, now remains a good time to vaccinate and still obtain full benefit of vaccine. To date, 39 culture confirmed cases of influenza have been identified in WV.

Consider purchasing additional vaccine at no financial risk in order to protect additional

individuals: Any public or private provider interested in purchasing vaccine should directly contact Sanofi Pasteur (formerly Aventis Pasteur) at 1-800-VACCINE or work through a distributor. All vaccine purchased after 1/27/05 has a “return policy” (providers receive credit for returned vaccine; providers should be responsible only for return shipping costs).

Any VFC providers with remaining VFC vaccine should be in contact with the WV

Immunization Program: Any VFC provider with remaining VFC vaccine who has not been contacted by the WV Immunization Program by noon on Monday, January 31, 2005 should immediately contact the WV Immunization Program toll-free at 1-800-642-3634 (558-2188 in Charleston).

OTHER INFORMATION:

Those with questions on the use of two pediatric (0.25 ml) doses as a substitute for a single 0.5 ml dose in older children or adults are referred to the CDC Q and A fact sheet found at <http://www.cdc.gov/flu/about/qa/vaxadmin.htm>.

For further information contact your local health department or the West Virginia Immunization Program at 304/558-2188, toll-free:1-800-642-3634, or CDC at 1-800-FLU-INFO.

This Message was directly distributed to Local Health Departments, Professional Societies (e.g., WVAPIC, WVSMA, WVHA, WVHCA, etc.), WVDHHR Disaster Network and Health Care Providers via a partnership with WVMI

Categories of Health Alert messages:

Health Alert: Conveys the highest level of importance; warrants immediate action or attention.

Health Advisory: Provides important information for a specific incident or situation. May not require immediate action.

Health Update: Provides updated information regarding an incident or situation. Unlikely to require immediate action.