

October 26, 2009

H₁N₁ Influenza A Update

New York Statewide School Health Services Center

President Obama Declares a National State of Emergency

When the President declares a State of Emergency and the Secretary for Health and Human Services declares a Public Health Emergency, the Secretary may tailor authorities granted under Section 1135 waivers to match the specific situational needs, but the requirements that may be waived include those related to Medicare, Medicaid or the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP), the Emergency Medical Treatment and Active Labor Act (EMTALA), and the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA). These requirements provide important protections for patients during normal day-to-day operations, but they may impede the ability of healthcare facilities to fully implement disaster operations plans that enable appropriate care during emergencies.

The New York Statewide School Health Services Center will alert schools and school health professionals in New York State as to the impact of this announcement as this evolving situation unfolds and continued guidance is released.

Suspension of Flu Shot Mandate For Health Care Employees Due to Shortage of Vaccine

Governor David A. Paterson announced on Thursday, October 22, 2009 that State Health Commissioner Richard F. Daines, M.D., has suspended the mandatory influenza immunization requirement for New York health care workers so that the limited vaccine supplies can be used for populations most at risk of serious illness and death – especially pregnant women as well as children and young people between the ages of 6 months and 24 years.

“Over the last week, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) acknowledged that New York would only receive approximately 23 percent of its anticipated vaccine supply by the end of the month,” Governor Paterson said. “As a result, we need to be as resourceful as we can with the limited supplies of vaccine currently coming into the State and make sure that those who are at the highest risk for complications from the H1N1 flu receive the first vaccine being distributed right now in New York State.”

H1N1 Influenza A in the News

We are seeing an increase in news headlines about the H1N1 Flu, including school closings and vaccine delays. It is important to direct your staff to the resources provided through the New York State Department of Health (NYSDOH) and the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) for accurate, evidence based guidance through this pandemic outbreak.

The NYSDOH and NYS Education Department Joint Guidance continues to advise school districts that any decisions about closing schools due to high absentee rates is a local district decision as determined by school administration in consultation with the school's medical director and local Health Department. Please refer to guidance as needed at:

<http://www.schoolhealthservicesny.com/uploads/NYSED%20NYDOH%20H1N1%208%2031%2009%20Guidance%20Memo.pdf>

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Key Flu Indicators from the CDC

- Visits to doctors for influenza-like illness (ILI) increased steeply since last week in the United States, and overall, are much higher than what is expected for this time of the year. ILI activity now is higher than what is seen during the peak of many regular flu seasons.
- Total influenza hospitalization rates for laboratory-confirmed flu are climbing and are higher than expected for this time of year.
- The proportion of deaths attributed to pneumonia and influenza (P&I) based on the 122 Cities Report has increased and has been higher than what is expected at this time of year for two weeks. In addition, 11 flu-related pediatric deaths were reported this week; 9 of these deaths were confirmed 2009 H1N1, and two were influenza A viruses, but were not subtyped. Since April 2009, CDC has received reports of 95 laboratory-confirmed pediatric 2009 H1N1 deaths and another 7 pediatric deaths that were laboratory confirmed as influenza, but where the flu virus subtype was not determined.
- Forty-six states are reporting widespread influenza activity at this time, including New York State. This many reports of widespread activity are unprecedented during seasonal flu.
- Almost all of the influenza viruses identified so far are 2009 H1N1 influenza A viruses. These viruses remain similar to the virus chosen for the 2009 H1N1 vaccine, and remain susceptible to the antiviral drugs oseltamivir and zanamivir with rare exception.

New Resources from the CDC

- Contamination and Cleaning: <http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/qa.htm#e>
- Questions & Answers: 2009 H1N1 Nasal Spray Vaccine: http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/vaccination/nasalspray_qa.htm
- Opening and Mixing Tamiflu® Capsules with Liquids if Child Cannot Swallow Capsules: http://www.cdc.gov/H1N1flu/antivirals/mixing_tamiflu_qa.htm
- Phone Contact Information for specific questions:
 - Contact the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC):
-Call 1-800-232-4636 (1-800-CDC-INFO)

H1N1 Influenza A Cases

New York State Department of Health

| Week ending | Flu A | Flu B | Flu, type unknown | Total |
|-------------|-------|-------|-------------------|-------|
| October 17 | 632 | 6 | 5 | 643 |

Centers for Disease Control – National Data as of October 20, 2009

| Cases Defined by | Hospitalizations | Deaths |
|-----------------------------------|------------------|--------|
| Influenza and Pneumonia Syndrome* | 21,823 | 2,416 |
| Influenza Laboratory-Tests** | 8,204 | 411 |

World Health Organization – Pandemic Alert Level – Phase 6