



WILL COUNTY HEALTH DEPARTMENT & COMMUNITY HEALTH CENTER

From: Epidemiology & Communicable Disease Program

To: Will County Healthcare Providers, Hospitals, Schools & Universities, and Emergency Medical Services

August 27, 2009

Re: H1N1 Vaccination Priority Groups

When H1N1 vaccine is first available, ACIP recommends that programs and providers administer vaccine to persons in the following five target groups (order of target groups does not indicate priority).

- **Pregnant women** because they are at higher risk of complications and can potentially provide protection to infants who cannot be vaccinated.
- **Household contacts and caregivers for children younger than 6 months of age** because younger infants are at higher risk of influenza-related complications and cannot be vaccinated. Vaccination of those in close contact with infants less than 6 months old might help protect infants by “cocooning” them from the virus.
- **Healthcare and emergency medical services personnel** because infections among healthcare workers have been reported and this can be a potential source of infection for vulnerable patients. Also, increased absenteeism in this population could reduce healthcare system capacity.

Health-care personnel (HCP) include all paid and unpaid persons working in health-care settings who have the potential for exposure to patients with influenza, infectious materials, including body substances, contaminated medical supplies and equipment, or contaminated environmental surfaces. HCP might include (but are not limited to) physicians, nurses, nursing assistants, therapists, technicians, emergency medical service personnel, dental personnel, pharmacists, laboratory personnel, autopsy personnel, students and trainees, contractual staff not employed by the health-care facility, and persons (e.g., clerical, dietary, housekeeping, maintenance, and volunteers) not directly involved in patient care but potentially exposed to infectious agents that can be transmitted to and from HCP. The recommendations in this report apply to HCP in acute-care hospitals, nursing homes, skilled nursing facilities, physicians' offices, urgent care centers, and outpatient clinics, and to persons who provide home health care and emergency medical services. Emergency medical services personnel might include persons in an occupation (e.g., emergency medical technicians and fire fighters) who provide emergency medical care as part of their normal job duties.

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Prevent. Promote. Protect.

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- **All people from 6 months through 24 years of age**
 - **Children from 6 months through 18 years of age** because we have seen many cases of novel H1N1 influenza in children and they are in close contact with each other in school and day care settings, which increases the likelihood of disease spread, and
 - **Young adults 19 through 24 years of age** because we have seen many cases of novel H1N1 influenza in these healthy young adults and they often live, work, and study in close proximity, and they are a frequently mobile population.
- **Persons aged 25 through 64 years who have health conditions associated with higher risk of medical complications from influenza.** Medical conditions that confer a higher risk for influenza-related complications include chronic pulmonary (including asthma), cardiovascular (except hypertension), renal, hepatic, cognitive, neurologic/neuromuscular, hematologic, or metabolic disorders (including diabetes mellitus) and immunosuppression (including immunosuppression caused by medications or by human immunodeficiency virus).

We do not expect that there will be a shortage of novel H1N1 vaccine, but flu vaccine availability and demand can be unpredictable and there is some possibility that initially, the vaccine will be available in limited quantities. So, the ACIP also made recommendations regarding which people within the groups listed above should be prioritized if the vaccine is initially available in extremely limited quantities.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact the Will County Health Department at (815) 727-5088.

