

**Seasonal Influenza Vaccine Supply Delayed for 2009-2010
Need to Plan for Concurrent
Seasonal and H1N1 Vaccine Efforts**

September 21, 2009

Based on national guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and in preparation for H1N1 flu vaccine arriving in October, the Maine CDC/DHHS asked health care providers to begin vaccinating with seasonal influenza vaccine as soon as it became available in August and September. We asked schools receiving state-supplied vaccine to schedule the majority of their seasonal flu clinics in September and early October.

Unfortunately, we have recently learned from both the CDC and the vaccine manufacturers that the scheduled delivery for the remaining doses of seasonal flu vaccine will not be as accelerated as originally anticipated, due to prioritization of H1N1 vaccine and other challenges. This delay is being felt across the country, and other states are in the process of postponing large scale seasonal flu vaccine clinics.

We have received about 40% of our overall seasonal flu vaccine supply to date. Remaining doses are expected to become available over the next 4-6 weeks with the majority of doses still expected by the end of October and all doses delivered by early November.

However, the timing of vaccine availability for the different types (seasonal and H1N1) may closely match virus circulation. Almost all of the influenza viruses currently circulating are H1N1. Seasonal influenza virus strains may not appear until later in the season.

There is some good news. It appears from preliminary clinical studies released today by US DHHS that children 10 – 18 may only need one dose of the H1N1 vaccine. Previous results in adults ages 18 – 65 indicate this population will also only need one dose. Dosage results for younger children are pending.

Recommendations

Maine CDC recommends that all health care providers continue to vaccinate patients with seasonal influenza vaccine during routine visits and in scheduled clinics as supply allows.

School Located and Other Large Scale Flu Clinics:

- Large public clinics and school located flu clinics that do not have their seasonal flu vaccine supply should be delayed until mid-late October or into November unless there is sufficient vaccine on hand to meet the expected demand. By late October, we anticipate both vaccine supplies

(seasonal and H1N1 flu vaccine) will be sufficient to mount large clinic efforts.

- Anticipate holding clinics for H1N1 flu vaccine starting in mid-late October and early November as well. Consider offering both seasonal and H1N1 flu vaccine at these clinics.

Pediatric and Other Providers:

- Continue to vaccinate your patients based on your available vaccine supply and formulation types.
- Schedule vaccination appointments in late October for any infants who cannot now be vaccinated due to lack of current supplies. By late October there should be sufficient supplies of both state-supplied and privately-purchased pediatric formulation seasonal flu vaccine.
- Plan for simultaneous administration of both seasonal and H1N1 flu vaccine starting in mid-late October or early November. Some H1N1 flu vaccine will become available starting in early October. Young children are one of the highest risk groups for H1N1 influenza. Pediatric providers will be allocated some of the initial doses of H1N1 vaccine that become available in Maine.

H1N1 and seasonal flu vaccines can be administered at the same time in different anatomical locations, though two nasal vaccines cannot be administered at the same time because of the inability of two nasal vaccines being sufficiently absorbed at the same time.

Please remember to register with the Maine CDC H1N1 Vaccine Registration System at <http://www.maine.gov/dhhs/boh/maineflu/h1n1/provider-agreement-2009-2010.shtml>, even if you are already enrolled with the Maine CDC's Immunization Program and receive other vaccines from us.

Any questions related to accessing the H1N1 flu vaccine or seasonal flu vaccine, the enrollment process, or general questions about the H1N1 vaccine allocation and distribution process can be directed to the Maine Immunization Program at 287-3746 or flu.questions@maine.gov. Information can also be found at: <http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/vaccination> or www.maine flu.gov.

We want to thank you for your efforts at this most difficult and challenging of times. We hope your hard work and preparations thus far will assist in the vaccine efforts later this fall. Maine is extremely fortunate to have such dedicated partners throughout our communities working on this effort to protect the public's health. Meanwhile, we will notify you if there are any changes in influenza vaccine supply.