

# MaineHealth

Weekly H1N1 Update Newsletter  
September 25, 2009

*Welcome to the MaineHealth H1N1 Weekly Update Newsletter  
A Publication of the MaineHealth H1N1 Workgroup*

## **About this Newsletter:**

This publication will be released each Friday morning throughout the fall and early winter to assist healthcare providers and infection prevention specialists in preparing for the effects of the H1N1 virus on the Maine population.

Each issue will contain:

- updates from national and state-wide public health organizations
- timely information related to workforce and target population vaccinations
- supply considerations

If you have additional questions or suggestions for this newsletter, please feel free to contact the publisher.

## **Maine CDC Update:**

To date, Maine has identified 388 cases of H1N1, which include 19 individuals requiring hospitalization and one individual who has died. The outbreak at Bowdoin College appears to be subsiding. In addition, there have been 2 apparent outbreaks of influenza-like illness in Central Maine schools creating absentee rates above 15%.

- **Maine CDC is working with:**
  - 1.) **Clinicians who provide health care for pregnant women to assure they have H1N1 vaccine for their patients and themselves as soon as it arrives in Maine.** On 9/17/09, US CDC updated its Interim Recommendations for Obstetric Health Care Providers: [www.cdc.gov/H1N1flu/pregnancy/antiviral\\_messages.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/H1N1flu/pregnancy/antiviral_messages.htm).
  - 2.) **The Regional Resource Centers at Eastern Maine Medical Center, Central Maine Medical Center, and Maine Medical Center, to assure that all health care providers and Emergency Medical Services personnel (EMS) are offered H1N1 vaccine during the first few weeks of its arrival.** H1N1 vaccine is anticipated to be available by mid October. Please see the area below that provides more information regarding health care workers.

**3.) The Maine Department of Education (DOE) to assure that all Maine children are offered seasonal (regular) and H1N1 vaccine in local schools.** The Maine CDC has distributed about 114,000 doses of seasonal flu vaccine, with most of this being distributed to schools or pediatric providers. About 14 schools or school districts have held seasonal flu vaccine clinics. Due to nationwide delays in shipping of seasonal flu vaccine, the Maine CDC recommended this week that school-located clinics be rescheduled if vaccine for those clinics had not already arrived.

- The Maine CDC will be holding two **conference calls for all interested stakeholders on H1N1 vaccine efforts** from 12:00-1:00 p.m. on Monday, Sept. 28 & Monday Oct. 5. The call-in number for both calls is 1-800-914-3396, pass code is 473623.
- **Seasonal Influenza Vaccine Supply Delayed for 2009-2010.** The Maine CDC has recently learned from both the US 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. Maine has received about 40% of its 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.
- The 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**.
- 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.
- **Good news!** Preliminary clinical studies released this week by US DHHS revealed 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: [www.nih.gov/news/health/sep2009/niaid-21.htm](http://www.nih.gov/news/health/sep2009/niaid-21.htm).

- **Simultaneous administration of *inactivated* vaccines** against seasonal and H1N1 influenza viruses **is permissible if different anatomic sites are used.** However, simultaneous administration of *live, attenuated vaccines* against seasonal and H1N1 influenza viruses is **not** recommended, and should be separated by 1 month.

### **Health Care Workers:**

The Maine CDC has developed a **health care provider tool kit** which is now available at <http://www.maine.gov/dhhs/boh/maineflu/h1n1/hc-providers/index.shtml>. The tool kit includes frequently asked questions, the Governor's Declaration, billing information, information related to the H1N1 vaccine and guidelines for maintenance, storage and transport of the vaccine.

H1N1 influenza vaccine will only be available through Maine CDC/DHHS in Maine, and will not be available for private purchase from manufacturers. Those interested in offering H1N1 vaccine **must complete and submit the H1N1 Provider Agreement** (even if already registered as a Maine Immunization Program provider). Additional information can be found at [www.maine.gov](http://www.maine.gov).

Healthcare workers who volunteer to provide vaccinations in school or community clinics must register with **MAINE RESPONDS ([www.maineresponds.org](http://www.maineresponds.org))** to receive state liability protection. Maine Responds will verify the credentials of registered volunteers, and names of verified volunteers will be added to a list posted by Maine Emergency Management Agency (MEMA) at: [www.maine.gov/mema](http://www.maine.gov/mema). If the volunteer is not on this list, he or she should not assume that they are covered by the Governor's declaration.

Healthcare workers who will administer vaccine as part of their regular employment are not required to register with Maine Responds, as liability coverage is traditionally provided by the employer for healthcare providers working within their normal scope of practice.

For additional information please contact Amanda Walker, Maine Responds Program Coordinator at (207) 662-5142 or by email at <mailto:walkea2@mmc.org>.

A common question health care organizations have is "**What is the definition of health care personnel for the purposes of prioritizing the H1N1 vaccine?**" The US CDC defines health care personnel (HCP) as "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.” (<http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/PDF/rr/rr5810.pdf>)

**Additional resources for health care providers:** Please note the new email addresses (below) for Maine H1N1 issues. These do not replace, but rather supplement the public hotline (888-257-0990, M-F 9-5) and the disease reporting and emergency consultation hotline (800-821-5821 24hr/7d). There is also a new healthcare provider/clinician FAQ for common questions to these addresses and hotlines, available at: <http://www.maine.gov/dhhs/boh/maineflu/h1n1/provider-faq.shtml>.

### **Supplies:**

**Antiviral Medications:** MaineHealth Supply Chain Management has received a proposal from Roche, the makers of Tamiflu that provides for several options for member and affiliate hospitals. Supply Chain staff has reached out to Pharmacy and Materials Councils across the health system to help determine the projected Tamiflu need. Once all the information is compiled, Supply Chain leadership will work with Roche to ensure that hospitals have adequate supply at the best possible cost. The federal government is also contracting with a variety of vendors for emergency supplies, which could cause a temporary interruption of MaineHealth supply. The Supply Chain staff is watching the situation closely and is working with the distributor to avoid any problems.

The pediatric suspension of Tamiflu is no longer available, but please see the attached link for Roche's solution to this shortage:

<http://www.tamiflu.com/hcp/dosing/extprep.aspx>.

### **Regional Event:**

SMRRC is hosting a “Southern Maine Regional Influenza Preparedness and Response Meeting” on October 7, 2009, 10:00 a.m. – 2:00 p.m., Hilton Garden Inn, Freeport, ME. This meeting targets healthcare and EMS professionals in decision-making positions within their organizations around seasonal and H1N1 influenza. **This event is specific to the Southern Maine Region, inclusive of York, Cumberland, Sagadahoc, and Lincoln Counties.** Registration information and agenda will be available soon at: <http://www.smrrc.org/>.

## **Vaccine Coordinators:**

Vaccine Coordinators have been appointed for each Public Health District in Maine. Vaccine Coordinators will be one component of **district leadership teams**, which also include staff from the three Regional Resource Centers for Public Health Emergency Preparedness and Emergency Management Agencies.

- District 1 – York: Sharon Leahy-Lind, 490-4625
- District 2 – Cumberland: Meredith Tipton, 592-5631
- District 3 – Western Maine: MaryAnn Amrich, 753-9103  
(Franklin, Oxford, and Androscoggin counties)
- District 4 – Mid Coast: Jen Gunderman-King, 596-4278  
(Waldo, Knox, Lincoln, and Sagadahoc counties)
- District 5 – Central Maine: Sue Lee, 592-5634  
(Somerset and Kennebec counties)

## **Publisher:**

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