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CDC Urges Continued Influenza Vaccination as Supplies of 2009 H1N1 Vaccine Increase

National Influenza Vaccination Week highlights importance of ongoing vaccination

Summary

The week of January 10-16 marks this flu season's National Influenza Vaccination Week (NIVW), a national observance established to highlight the importance of ongoing influenza vaccination beyond the fall. At this time, providers are encouraged to continue vaccinating high risk persons with the remaining supplies of seasonal vaccine and to expand 2009 H1N1 vaccination to anyone who wants it, regardless of age. Because supply and availability of the 2009 H1N1 vaccine have increased dramatically, CDC is now encouraging people who have been patiently waiting to receive the 2009 H1N1 vaccine to get vaccinated as well as continuing to encourage unvaccinated people in priority groups to get vaccinated. NIVW activities during the upcoming week will seek to enhance public awareness about ongoing influenza vaccination efforts. Influenza is unpredictable, but influenza is expected to continue for months, caused by either 2009 H1N1 viruses or regular seasonal influenza viruses.

As of December 10, 2009, more than 110 million doses of seasonal influenza vaccine had been distributed. Since then, it is likely that the total estimated amount of 114 million doses of seasonal influenza vaccine have been distributed. Demand for seasonal influenza vaccine has been very high this season. As a result, supplies of seasonal vaccine are now limited. Providers are encouraged to continue administering remaining supplies of seasonal vaccine.

As of January 7, 2010, the cumulative pro rata allocation is approximately 136 million doses of 2009 H1N1 vaccine. As of January 5, 2010, approximately 111 million doses have been shipped, so supplies of 2009 H1N1 vaccine available to be administered are ample. Although the 2009 H1N1 vaccine was initially prioritized to certain target groups, due to the increase in supply most jurisdictions are now making vaccine available for everyone who wishes to receive it.

As of mid-November, an estimated 47 million Americans have had 2009 H1N1 influenza, with approximately 213,000 hospitalizations and 9,820 deaths. There is no way to accurately predict the course of influenza epidemics. Although influenza activity has declined in recent weeks, many persons remain unprotected, and additional cases, hospitalizations, and deaths are expected to occur this season. The 2009 H1N1 vaccine is the best way to protect against 2009 H1N1 influenza. Those who have yet to be vaccinated are encouraged to get vaccinated now. This includes people with chronic medical conditions, pregnant women, and others in the initial target groups, as well as people who were asked to wait to be vaccinated when 2009 H1N1 vaccine supplies were limited.

Among those who have been waiting to get vaccine are people 65 years and older as well as people 25-64 who do not have a chronic medical condition. These groups are encouraged to get vaccinated. While older people have been less likely to be infected with the 2009 H1N1 virus compared to younger people, there have been severe infections and deaths from 2009 H1N1 in every age group, including people 65 and older. Some outbreaks among older people living in long-term care facilities also have been reported.

Vaccination with 2009 H1N1 vaccine continues to be particularly important for people in the initial target groups, including pregnant women; household contacts and caregivers of infants younger than six months of age; health care and emergency medical services personnel; all individuals six months through 24 years of age; and individuals 25 through 64 years of age who have medical conditions associated with higher risk of complications from influenza. It is important for unvaccinated people in these groups to take advantage of the ample vaccine supply and get vaccinated now.

This year's national NIVW schedule is as follows:

Day	Focus
Sunday, January 10	Kickoff
Monday, January 11	General audience and health care workers
Tuesday, January 12	People with chronic health conditions that put them at higher risk of serious influenza-related complications
Wednesday, January 13	Children, pregnant women, and caregivers of infants less than 6 months old
Thursday, January 14	Young adults (19 through 24 years old)
Friday, January 15	Seniors
Saturday, January 16	Wrap-up

For More Information:

- For a schedule of events and additional information and links related to NIVW see: <http://www.cdc.gov/flu/NIVW/index.htm>.
- NIVW posters, audio and video public service announcements (PSAs), and other influenza educational materials are available to download for local printing and distribution at <http://www.cdc.gov/flu/freeresources/index.htm>. Other influenza-related tools and information for health-care professionals and patients are available at <http://www.flu.gov>.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) protects people's health and safety by preventing and controlling diseases and injuries; enhances health decisions by providing credible information on critical health issues; and promotes healthy living through strong partnerships with local, national and international organizations.

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

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##This Message was distributed to State and Local Health Officers, Public Information Officers, Epidemiologists and HAN Coordinators as well as Clinician organizations##

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