

Emergency Management, Department of Health and Department of Education
State Surgeon General Weekly Update
Thursday, October 8, 2009

State Surgeon General Update – Dr. Ana Viamonte Ros

This is the NINTH in a weekly series of conference calls where I have the opportunity to share the latest information on the H1N1 Influenza situation in Florida.

Today, I will share the current disease situation in Florida and a few key updates since last week. Most importantly we would like to hear your questions and concerns.

H1N1 Disease Update

- The levels of influenza H1N1 infections increased dramatically in late August and the first part of September, and remain high. Normally at this time of year fewer than 2% of emergency department visits are for influenza-like illness; currently that value is at about 7 %, rising slightly over the past week.
- Widespread activity is reported in 15 counties.
- Localized activity is reported in 19 counties.
- Hospital emergency department visits with influenza-like illness remain high in all parts of the state, as do physician office visits. Children and adolescents are experiencing the biggest increase. Approximately 65 % of all emergency department visits for influenza-like illness are in children and adolescents under age 19. Fewer than 8 % are in people aged 65 and older. This is similar to what we have seen in the previous several weeks. While ED visits are most in children, hospitalizations and deaths are mostly in middle-aged adults.
- 808 hospitalizations in persons from Florida with lab confirmed H1N1 have been reported cumulatively as of October 6.
- There have been 110 deaths reported in Florida residents with lab confirmed H1N1, cumulatively as of October 6. Overall mortality with influenza or pneumonia is slightly above the expected value for the time of year and is being watched carefully.
- Many counties' public and private schools have had reported outbreaks of influenza-like illness, and some have had severe localized outbreaks. Most schools have not had significant disruption from influenza.

Vaccine Campaign Update

- Last week, Florida placed initial orders for H1N1 Swine Flu vaccine. This initial shipment was the FluMist nasal spray which has limits on use and was in small quantities. Counties expect to receive those orders today or tomorrow. Additional vaccine will be available this week for order and we expect it to include some prefilled syringes, multidose vials, and additional FluMist. As a reminder, these initial allocations are small. Counties are targeting allocations to effectively reach the CDC-recommended target populations based on the type of vaccine available each week.
- Once sufficient vaccine becomes available and counties begin offering public vaccination clinics, clinic location by county will be available on the myflusafety.com website.
- We recommend that anyone within the priority groups get vaccinated, even if they believe they have already contracted H1N1. Unless a person has had a state laboratory confirmed case of H1N1, it can not be certain that they have contracted H1N1.
- We have over 3,000 private health care providers currently in the H1N1 system committed to providing vaccination services as product becomes available.
- As a reminder again, the H1N1 vaccine is voluntary.

Seasonal Flu Vaccine

- Seasonal flu vaccine is available throughout the state. Supplies may fluctuate.

Additional Information

- All orders for pediatric masks received by the state have been shipped. There are pediatric masks in the state inventory and available for requests.
- There are new hand-washing information posters being printed and readied for shipment to the Department of Education and CHD's for posting in schools. One of the new posters has a theme using the "Dracula" character that will appeal to all K-12 students.
- The DOH H1N1 Influenza website has been redesigned and has a new question/answer section. Please visit our site at www.myflusafety.com.
- For additional information, call the toll-free Florida Flu Information Line at 1-877-352-3581.