

The Pennsylvania Department of Health (PA DOH) will distribute the H1N1 Status Update Report weekly. Please forward this update to other H1N1 response and planning partners.

Surveillance

Epidemiological Data:

Current data shows that the virus is widespread throughout the commonwealth. Over the past week, influenza like illness (ILI) activity has increased throughout most areas of the state.

Among confirmed cases since September 1, 2009, the age and gender breakdown is as follows:

Age Range Most Affected:	Percent of Total Cases:	Gender	Percent of Total Cases:
0 - 4	7.4%	<i>Male</i>	51%
5 - 9	16.4%	<i>Female</i>	49%
10 - 14	25.6%		100.0%
15 - 19	14.7%		
20 - 29	16.4%		
30 - 39	6.8%		
40 - 49	6.1%		
50 - 59	4.5%		
60+	2.1%		
	100.0%		

(Updated October 2, 2009)

H1N1 and Target Groups:

Children and young adults, nationwide, are being especially hard hit by the H1N1 virus. In a report released by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) last week, it was reported that over half of all hospitalizations and 23% of deaths from H1N1 have been among people under 24 years of age. In addition, 90% of all H1N1 hospitalizations and deaths have been among those 64 and younger. These statistics are almost exactly opposite from what is seen for seasonal flu, when the over 65 age group is affected most dramatically.

The CDC also circulated an alert to healthcare providers reminding them about early initiation of antiviral treatment for those at increased risk of complications. To review the PA DOH guidance on antiviral use, please visit www.H1N1inPA.com and click the link for "Info for Specific Groups" and choose "Information for Healthcare Providers." Guidance documents and Health Alert Network (PA HAN) advisories are located under "Health Advisories and Alerts."

Vaccine/Antivirals

Provider Pre-Registry:

Facilities with medical oversight, by an MD or DO, may pre-register to receive and administer the H1N1 vaccine at their site. The pre-registration site will remain open until October 30, 2009, at which time the site will close permanently. Once pre-registered, two documents will be sent for completion: User Agreement and Provider Agreement. Providers are asked to return these documents as soon as possible to ensure timely verification by the PA DOH. Only after these documents have been verified will an entity be given clearance to place orders for H1N1 vaccine.

Vaccine:

Vaccine orders continued to be filled this week as vaccine became available from the CDC. Allocation determinations are based on the vaccine types and amounts available, providers which can reach the target populations, and the current data on the disease collected by the PA DOH. The PA DOH continues to target all priority groups, with special emphasis on individuals 6 months – 24 years and pregnant women.

Shipments of vaccine continue to be released by the CDC. The rate at which the vaccine is being produced is slower than anticipated and there is less vaccine available at this time than expected. The overall production of the H1N1 vaccine will remain as originally anticipated. However, it will now take longer to reach the states than expected. Many doses of the H1N1 vaccine have been administered to the target groups by healthcare providers, schools and local health departments throughout the state.

To find out where to obtain the vaccine, individuals in priority groups should: contact their healthcare provider; contact their child's school; or call 1-877-PA HEALTH for location information. Once additional quantities of vaccine are available people not in the initial target groups, will be able to receive the vaccine at PA DOH hosted public mass vaccination clinics, most likely in November. Vaccine administration will be free at these PA DOH run clinics. Public mass vaccination locations and dates will be posted on www.H1N1inPA.com as soon as they are scheduled.

Fees:

Many questions have been raised regarding fees for H1N1 vaccine from both providers and the public. A provider may charge an *administration* fee for the H1N1 vaccine; however, they may not charge for the actual *vaccine*. The administration fee may not exceed the regional Medicaid rate for an area. Many insurance companies will cover the administration fee. Individuals are encouraged to contact their insurance provider for specific coverage information.

Vaccines administered at PA DOH mass vaccination clinics will be provided at no charge to the individual. The PA DOH is working to ensure that cost is not a barrier to anyone seeking vaccination.

Communications

H1N1 Website:

The www.H1N1inPA.com Web site will be available in Spanish and is scheduled to go live October 30. Also, in the “campaign materials” section of the website (located in the newsroom), there are several H1N1 messages available in sign language.

The “Frequently Asked Questions” section of www.H1N1inPA.com will be updated with many new items in the coming weeks. The Q&As will also be divided by category for ease of reference.

Media Campaign:

The prevention campaign for H1N1 is running via radio and TV spots, bus placards, and other media throughout the commonwealth. Materials are placed on the www.H1N1inPA.com Web site as they are developed, with many available for download. The vaccine campaign (including a vaccine campaign for healthcare workers) is ready to launch when Pennsylvania receives larger quantities of vaccine. The PA DOH also has free posters and paycheck inserts available for order on www.H1N1inPA.com, in English and Spanish. You can find them in the newsroom, under campaign materials.

Community Mitigation

Limiting Spread of Germs:

Community mitigation is crucial in slowing the spread of H1N1 through the fall. Community mitigation generally involves little or no money, but can offer substantial disease reduction. Strategies consist of basic, everyday approaches to limit the spread of germs, which include:

SNEEZE OR COUGH INTO A TISSUE
or your sleeve (not your hand).

KEEP YOUR HANDS AWAY FROM YOUR FACE
(and don't touch your mouth, nose and eyes).

WASH YOUR HANDS *with soap often (an alcohol-based hand sanitizer works too).*

KEEP FREQUENTLY USED SURFACES CLEAN *(like knobs, countertops and desks).*

AND STAY HOME
from work or school if you do get sick.

For more information on prevention and protection call 1-877-PA-HEALTH or go to H1N1inPA.com 

General Interest

CDC Documents:

The CDC released many new guidance documents, tool kits, and informational pieces over the last several weeks. For those interested in printable handout materials, flyers and brochures, visit www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/freeresources.htm.

Questions and Answers

For answers to these questions and more, please go to www.H1N1inPA.com and click on “frequently asked questions.”

Question: *I heard that individuals need to wait a month between seasonal and H1N1 vaccinations, is this true?*

Answer: This may be true, depending on type of vaccine received. An individual cannot receive two live vaccines (the LAIV preparation or flu-mist) on the same day and must wait 28 days between applications. Therefore, they must wait 28 days before getting another LAIV dose - whether it is seasonal or H1N1. There is no harm in going beyond 28 days; however, if given sooner than this, the effectiveness is diminished.

Individuals who receive the shot (inactive vaccine) form of the H1N1 or seasonal vaccine, may receive both on the same day. Additionally, persons can receive one live and one inactive vaccine on the same day.

Question: *Vaccination is recommended for adults 25 – 64 with high risk conditions. What conditions are considered “high risk”?*

Answer: Underlying conditions include asthma, diabetes, suppressed immune systems, heart disease, kidney disease, neurocognitive and neuromuscular disorders and pregnancy.

Question: *I am not a nurse or doctor, can I still assist with the mass vaccination campaign?*

Answer: Yes! There are many ways that individuals can assist with response activities, such as: manning a registration table, directing patient flow, or answering non-medical questions at a mass vaccination sites. Please go to www.serv.pa.gov and register with SERVPA. Registering through SERVPA indicates to the PA DOH interest in volunteering. During this process, individuals will provide their background and preference information.

If you have any questions, comments, or suggestions, please feel free to submit those to the following email address: PADOH_H1N1@state.pa.us. Responses will be addressed in this document, as individual responses will not be possible.

If you have any specific questions to be answered more quickly, please call 1-877-PA HEALTH (1-877-724-3258).