



H1N1 Partner and School Briefing

Date: November 4, 2009
To: All Rhode Islanders
From: Director of Health, David R. Gifford, MD, MPH
Re: Information on H1N1 and school-based vaccination clinics in Rhode Island

Local Influenza Activity Level: Widespread¹, H1N1 predominant circulating strain

Rhode Island²: 83 hospitalized cases, 3 deaths

Sentinel Surveillance (% of visits due to influenza-like illness)³: Rhode Island: 5.4%, New England Region: 4.4%, Nation: 8.0%

School-based vaccination clinic recommendations

Twenty-four elementary schools have already hosted evening H1N1 vaccination clinics this week. The organizers of these clinics have advised the Rhode Island Department of Health (HEALTH) of different practices that helped them run smoothly.

- Arrange for adequate security in your clinic's registration area, vaccine administration area and outside of your school. Security outside of your school will help address traffic-flow issues. School leaders should work with their local Emergency Management Agency director to arrange for the presence of security.
- Establish a separate area to vaccinate hysterical or disruptive children.
- Plan your clinic so that children who are awaiting vaccination are shielded from other children who are receiving their shots.
- Provide an activity for younger children to keep them calm and occupied during their 15-minute observation periods.
- Use stickers or stamps to identify students who have been registered for their vaccination but who can not immediately receive it.
- Have ample school staff to register students. This will ensure an orderly registration process and familiar faces have been a comfort to both parents and students.
- Provide clear signage outside and inside of your school that will direct parents to the location of the clinic in your school.
- Be prepared with enrollment rosters at your registration tables. This will help ensure that only students who attend your school will be vaccinated in your school.
- Communicate to the parents of the students who will attend evening clinics plans to stagger vaccinations (e.g. "Children with last names beginning with the letters A through G will be vaccinated between 4 and 5:30 p.m.").

Recording prohibited in school-based clinics

School-based H1N1 vaccination clinics are medical care settings. In accordance with Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) guidelines and patient confidentiality laws, photography and video and audio recordings of any kind are prohibited in clinics when students are being vaccinated. This policy

¹ Rhode Island reported Regional activity for the week of October 25 to October 31, 2009. Influenza is circulating in 5 regions of the state. For details see <http://www.health.ri.gov/flu/about/surveillance/>.

² Influenza-associated hospitalizations and deaths since September 1, 2009

³ Influenza-like illness activity from October 18 to October 24, 2009

applies to parents, students and members of the media. Media access to an individual school outside of clinic hours is at the discretion of the school district.

Temperature guidelines for school-based vaccination clinics

HEALTH has established 100.4°F/38°C as the temperature cutoff for school-based H1N1 vaccination clinics. A child with a fever of 100.4°F/38°C or higher is too sick to be in school or to receive the H1N1 vaccine in a school-based clinic. These children will have to wait to receive the H1N1 vaccine in their providers' offices once it becomes available. Health is aware that children can generally receive the H1N1 vaccine in their providers' offices with temperatures up to 101°F, even if they are mildly ill.

Updated vaccination policy for students attending out-of-state schools

HEALTH will organize a vaccination clinic (or more than one clinic) for school-aged children who live in Rhode Island but who attend out-of-state private schools. This change from the policy communicated in last week's partner briefing that these students would have to receive the vaccine in clinics organized by their out-of-state schools or in their providers' offices is necessary due to regional variations in the vaccine programs in neighboring states. The clinic or clinics for students in out-of-state private schools will be held sometime after Thanksgiving. HEALTH will communicate additional information about the date, time, and location of this clinic or these clinics once it becomes available. Out-of-state residents who attend Rhode Island schools are still eligible to receive the vaccine in their schools.

HEALTH issues statement regarding Tamiflu and Theraflu

HEALTH recently issued a press release clarifying the difference between the antiviral medication **Tamiflu** and the over-the-counter medication **Theraflu**. Theraflu may reduce fever or body aches, but it does not lessen the severity or duration of the flu. Parents have been advised to consult their pediatricians or family physicians before giving their children Theraflu, as some preparations have high doses of acetaminophen and are unsafe for children. To read the full press release, please see <http://www.ri.gov/press/view/10086>.

Fill Tamiflu prescriptions as soon as possible

Individuals who have been prescribed antiviral medications should begin treatment as soon as possible. The benefits of antiviral medications are greatest when they are started within the first two days of illness. Unfortunately, Rhode Island prescribing data shows that 15% of Tamiflu prescriptions are being filled five or more days after the prescriptions are written. To review the CDC's recommendations on antiviral medications, see <http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/recommendations.htm>.

Resources

- HEALTH at <http://www.health.ri.gov>;
- Archived partner briefings and regular news updates: <http://www.health.ri.gov/news/flu/>
- H1N1 Information Line (M-F 8:30am- 4:30pm) 401-222-8022
- H1N1 email address h1n1@health.ri.gov
- <http://www.flu.gov>