



H1N1 Partner and School Briefing

Date: December 29, 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: Local¹, H1N1 predominant circulating strain
Rhode Island²: 359 hospitalized cases, 9 deaths
Sentinel Surveillance (% of visits due to influenza-like illness)³: Rhode Island: 1.1%, New England Region: 1.0%, Nation: 2.35%

H1N1 flu vaccine available at Rhode Island pharmacies

H1N1 flu vaccine is available at participating pharmacies in Rhode Island for individuals who are 18 years of age and older. These pharmacies include independent stores and CVS, Walgreens, Rite Aid, and Stop & Shop branches. To find a location with H1N1 vaccine by zip code, see the **Flu Vaccine Locator** on the website of the Rhode Island Department of Health (HEALTH) (www.health.ri.gov). Please note that not all participating pharmacies have registered in this recently-developed system yet. As H1N1 vaccine providers continue to register in this online system and as HEALTH updates it to include public H1N1 flu vaccination clinics, it will direct Rhode Islanders to the nearest locations with H1N1 vaccine.

H1N1 vaccine availability in healthcare providers' offices

Healthcare providers are prioritizing the following populations for office-based vaccinations against H1N1 flu:

- Adults through age 64 with chronic medical conditions.
- Young adults through age 24.
- School-aged children who missed their first doses of vaccine at their schools.
- Caregivers of infants younger than 6 months of age.

As vaccine supply allows, healthcare providers are vaccinating lower-risk patients, such as healthy adults and healthy seniors citizens. Free, public clinics for these populations will open in January.

School-based clinics for second doses of H1N1 vaccine

On January 4, HEALTH will post on its website (www.health.ri.gov) a schedule for school-based clinics for second doses of H1N1 vaccine. Only children who were younger than 10 years of age at the time of their schools' first H1N1 vaccination clinics will be vaccinated at upcoming clinics. **Some schools attended by children who meet this age requirement may not be included on this schedule. The leaders of these schools should contact their State H1N1 School Clinic Coordinators as soon as possible.** Contact information for these coordinators can be found in the document attached to this message.

Beginning on January 11, this second round of clinics will span approximately four weeks. For answers to frequently asked questions about second doses of H1N1 vaccine, see:
<http://www.health.ri.gov/news/H1N1Advisories/FAQsAboutSchoolClinicsForSecondDosesOfH1N1Vaccine.pdf>.

¹ Rhode Island reported Regional activity for the week of December 20 to December 26, 2009. Percentages of influenza-like illness remain above baseline in all five regions of the state. For details see <http://www.health.ri.gov/flu/about/surveillance/>.

² Confirmed and probable hospitalizations and deaths since September 1, 2009

³ Influenza-like illness activity from December 13 to December 19, 2009

Volunteering for school-based H1N1 flu vaccination clinics

RI Responds will hold two H1N1 Competency Training Courses for individuals interested in volunteering for school-based clinics for second doses of H1N1 vaccine. To volunteer, individuals must register in advance and attend one of the two training courses. The courses will take place on January 4, 2010 and January 5, 2010 from 6 p.m. until 8:30 p.m. They will take place at RI Responds' headquarters at 50 Barnett Lane in West Greenwich. Register by visiting www.riresponds.org and clicking on the "Sign Up for Training" link. Those who are registered will receive confirmation emails.

Those who already completed previous RI Responds H1N1 training courses CAN volunteer at school-based clinics without taking new courses, but still must contact RI Responds. For more information about volunteering for school-based clinics for second doses of H1N1 vaccine, write to info@riresponds.org.

H1N1 vaccination of healthcare workers and first responders

Although some Healthcare Service Regions (HSRs) will host additional H1N1 flu vaccination clinics, all HSRs will host H1N1 vaccine point-of-dispensing (POD) clinics for healthcare workers and first responders on January 9, 2010. These clinics will run from noon until 5 p.m. HEALTH is expanding vaccination through these POD clinics to any licensed healthcare professional, such as dentists, podiatrists, and mental health workers, and to their clinical staff. For consent forms for these clinics, see <http://www.health.ri.gov/facilities/hospitals/about/serviceregions/index.php>.

Healthcare Service Region H1N1 Information Lines

Some of the lead hospitals in Rhode Island's HSRs have established H1N1 Information Lines. Healthcare workers and first responders seeking more information about the H1N1 vaccination strategy in their HSRs can find these Information Lines on HEALTH's website at:

<http://www.health.ri.gov/facilities/hospitals/about/serviceregions/index.php>. Please continue to direct general questions about H1N1 and Rhode Island's vaccination strategy to HEALTH's H1N1 Information Line, (401) 222-8022.

Voluntary H1N1 vaccine recall NOT safety related

Last week one of the manufacturers of H1N1 vaccine announced a voluntary recall of specific shipments of nasal spray vaccine. While this includes some of Rhode Island's allocated vaccine, **this recall was not safety related**. The manufacturer issued the recall after observing a slight decrease in the vaccine's strength over time. **The recalled vaccine provided individuals who received it as much immunity as any other dose of the vaccine would have. Individuals who received this vaccine do not need to be re-vaccinated** (however, children who are younger than 10 years of age should still receive second doses of H1N1 vaccine). Healthcare providers are working with HEALTH to return any recalled vaccine.

Holiday Partner and School Briefing and Information Line schedule

HEALTH will release its next Partner and School Briefing on Tuesday, January 5, 2010.

HEALTH's H1N1 Information Line (401-222-8022) will close at noon on December 31, 2009 and will be closed all day on January 1, 2010. The Information Line will otherwise keep its normal hours this holiday season – Monday through Friday, 8:30 a.m. until 4:30 p.m. Responders on this line are prepared to answer H1N1-related questions in English and Spanish.

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>