



H1N1 Partner and School Briefing

Date: December 22, 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: Regional¹, H1N1 predominant circulating strain
Rhode Island²: 356 hospitalized cases, 9 deaths
Sentinel Surveillance (% of visits due to influenza-like illness)³: Rhode Island: 1.79%, New England Region: 2.3%, Nation: 2.64%

H1N1 vaccination goal of 500,000 before Valentine's Day

The Rhode Island Department of Health (HEALTH) announced yesterday its goal of vaccinating 500,000 Rhode Islanders against H1N1 flu before Valentine's Day, February 14. Vaccination remains the most effective way to fight H1N1 flu and prevent another wave of illness this spring.

Expansion of H1N1 vaccine availability

HEALTH is expanding its H1N1 vaccination program after receiving additional vaccine from the federal government. Healthcare providers are prioritizing the following populations for office-based vaccinations:

- 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 old.

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.

Rhode Island CVS, Walgreens, Rite Aid, and Stop & Shop pharmacies that enrolled in the H1N1 vaccine program should receive their first deliveries of H1N1 vaccine by the end of this week. Vaccine will only be available in these settings for individuals who are 18 years of age and older. A press release about the expansion of HEALTH's H1N1 vaccination program is available at: <http://www.ri.gov/press/view/10408>.

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. Beginning on January 11, this second round of clinics will span approximately four weeks. 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. Children who are 10 years of age and older do not require second doses of H1N1 vaccine. For the 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 13 to December 19, 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 6 to December 12, 2009

Clinic dates and locations for out-of-state college students

H1N1 vaccination clinics for Rhode Islanders through age 24 who attend out-of-state colleges and universities will be held on December 30, 2009 from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. and on January 6, 2010 from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. at the Community College of Rhode Island's Knight Campus in Warwick. Anyone who has already pre-registered should have received an email explaining the need to complete a second registration to choose a preferred date and time for vaccination. Those students who have not yet pre-registered must visit HEALTH's website to complete the registration process. **Registration for both clinics will close on December 26.** Registration is required to attend these clinics, and walk-ins will be turned away.

New posters promoting vaccination available on HEALTH's website

New posters encouraging vaccination for parents and caregivers of children with chronic medical conditions and infants younger than six months are available to download and print from HEALTH's website at <http://www.health.ri.gov/flu/about/prevention/> (Look for the section titled "Educational Resources"). These posters are available in both English and Spanish. Although infants who are younger than 6 months of age are too young to be vaccinated, parents and caregivers can protect their children by being vaccinated.

Visitor restrictions in hospitals lifted

Rhode Island Hospital, Hasbro Children's Hospital, Miriam Hospital and Newport Hospital have lifted visitor restrictions on children younger than 18 years of age. However, both children and adults experiencing the symptoms of influenza-like illness (fever and a cough or fever and a sore throat) should not visit patients in these hospitals until after they are fever free for 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medication.

H1N1 vaccination of healthcare workers and first responders

Over the next few weeks, healthcare workers and first responders will have the opportunity to receive the H1N1 vaccine through the Healthcare Service Region (HSR) in which they work. Each of Rhode Island's 10 HSRs will hold an H1N1 vaccine point-of-dispensing (POD) clinic for healthcare workers and first responders the weekend of January 9, 2010. 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.

H1N1 vaccination for nursing home residents

The H1N1 vaccine will be available to nursing homes. Nursing homes enrolled as vaccine providers should be receiving H1N1 vaccine for all of their patients by the end of the year. Other nursing homes may order via retail pharmacies as they do for the seasonal flu vaccine. A fax will be sent out to all nursing homes with more information about vaccine ordering and administration.

Totals for the first round of school-based H1N1 vaccination clinics

During the first round of HEALTH's H1N1 school-based vaccination program, 120,930 school-aged children received the H1N1 vaccine in 421 school-based clinics.

H1N1 Information Line holiday hours of operation

HEALTH's H1N1 Information Line (401-222-8022) will close at noon on December 24 and December 31 and will be closed all day on December 25 and January 1. 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.

Partner and School Briefings schedule

HEALTH will release its next two Partner and School Briefings on Tuesdays (December 29, 2009 and January 5, 2010).

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>