

Ulster County Weekly H1N1 Update - Summary Released: 13 –Nov. 09

- The Ulster County Health Department (UCHD) continues to see a steady increase in influenza-like illness (ILI) reported by health care providers, Emergency Departments, & schools in Ulster County.
- In order to protect the patients and staff of HealthAlliance (Benedictine, Kingston, & Margaretville Hospitals) and Ellenville Hospital from exposure to the seasonal and H1N1 viruses, new visitor restrictions have been created. The number of visitors per patient; age groups of visitors; and visitors experiencing ILI have been restricted.
- Residents should plan on getting the vaccine when it arrives, even if that is as late as January because in previous pandemics there have been two and three waves of illness over a year or so after the emergence of a new influenza virus.
- It's not possible to predict how long activity will remain high, when this wave will peak and when activity will begin to decline.
- Locally Health Care Providers (HCPs) continue to receive small amounts of the H1N1 vaccine. Residents who are in the priority groups should stay in touch with their medical providers to obtain information about getting vaccinated.
- The 2009 H1N1 influenza vaccine is available in two forms; a live attenuated intranasal vaccine (LAIV) which is sprayed into the nose and an inactivated vaccine that is given as a shot.
- There is currently limited availability of both forms with slightly higher amounts of the nasal spray vaccine available from HCPs.
- Both versions of the vaccination are the most effective method for preventing influenza virus infection and its complications.
- This nasal spray vaccine is licensed for use among ages 2-49 years who are healthy, do not have an underlying medical condition and are not pregnant.

For additional information about H1N1 and updates, visit our website at: www.UlsterCountyNY.gov/health or call seasonal flu hotline: **340-3093**. Also visit <http://www.flucliniclocator.org/> to see if there are any flu vaccine clinics scheduled at retail outlets near you or call NYS DOH Hotline 1-800-808-1987.

**Ulster County Health Department
Seasonal and H1N1 Influenza Advisory
Update 11/13/09**

Influenza Monitoring:

The Ulster County Health Department (UCHD) continues to see a steady increase in influenza-like illness (ILI) reported by health care providers, Emergency Departments, & schools in Ulster County. Emergency departments have reported a moderate increase in visits since last week due to influenza-like illness. The majority of patients are children and young adults with mild to moderate flu like symptoms. At this time, the hospitals have adequate supplies and staffing and have not initiated surge plans as of yet. Numerous schools have reported clusters of ILI among students and have taken proper infection control measures. Historically the student absenteeism rates are similar to past cold and flu seasons. UCHD is continuing to monitor influenza activity on a daily basis.

Nationally, the H1N1 influenza virus continues to be the dominant flu virus circulating at this time. Forty-eight states, including New York State, are reporting widespread influenza activity. The number of cases nationwide including, hospitalizations and deaths is occurring overwhelmingly in people 64 years and younger. This is very different from seasonal influenza and illustrates that the burden of disease associated with 2009 H1N1 virus is greater among younger persons and relatively less among persons 65 years and older compared with seasonal flu. Flu activity is widespread in most of the country at this time, which is highly unusual during regular seasonal flu for this time of year, but not unexpected for a pandemic.

Status of Prevention Efforts:

Visitor Restrictions for Local Hospitals: In order to protect the patients and staff of HealthAlliance (Benedictine, Kingston, & Margaretville Hospitals) and Ellenville Hospital from exposure to the seasonal and H1N1 viruses, new visitor restrictions have been created. The number of visitors per patient; age groups of visitors; and visitors experiencing ILI have been restricted. The new policy is to help reduce the spread of influenza within the facilities as a preventative measure.

Flu Vaccination Information: Residents should plan on getting the vaccine when it arrives, even if that is as late as January because in previous pandemics there have been two and three waves of illness over a year or so after the emergence of a new influenza virus. At this time, we are experiencing the second wave of 2009 H1N1 activity. It's not possible to predict how long activity will remain high, when this wave will peak and when activity will begin to decline. Locally Health Care Providers (HCPs) continue to receive small amounts of the H1N1 vaccine.

The 2009 H1N1 influenza vaccine is available in two forms; a live attenuated intranasal vaccine (LAIV) which is sprayed into the nose and an inactivated vaccine that is given as a shot. There is currently limited availability of both forms with slightly higher amounts

Ulster County Weekly Update

of the nasal spray vaccine available from HCPs. Both versions of the vaccination are the most effective method for preventing influenza virus infection and its complications.

2009 H1N1 intranasal LAIV:

This vaccine is licensed for use among ages 2-49 years who are healthy, do not have an underlying medical condition and are not pregnant.

2009 H1N1 intranasal LAIV can be used with the following priority groups:

- Otherwise healthy persons age 2 to 24 years.
- Otherwise healthy persons age 2 to 49 years who live with or provide care for infants aged <6 months (e.g., parents, siblings, and daycare providers).
- Otherwise healthy health care and emergency medical services personnel (HCP) up to age 49 years who are not contacts of severely immunosuppressed persons may receive 2009 H1N1 intranasal LAIV.

Residents who are in the priority groups should stay in touch with their medical providers to obtain information about getting vaccinated. Please remember that providers are doing their best to respond to the demand and their inability to offer vaccine is due to the national shortage.

There continues to be a delay in receipt of seasonal flu vaccine. The CDC reported that there might not be an adequate supply of seasonal flu vaccine to meet the increased demand. It is good practice to call our seasonal Flu Hotline at (845) 340-3093 to hear the most current information regarding the schedule for future clinics. The information will also be posted on our website at www.UlsterCountyNY.gov/health.

Additionally, those interested in vaccinations should call their primary care physician and/or local pharmacy for information about where to get a flu shot or check <http://www.flucliniclocator.org/> to see if there are any flu vaccine clinics scheduled at retail outlets near you.

The New York State Department of Health has developed the *Flu Vaccination Clinics in New York State webpage*, where the public can click on a county and find more information about where to get seasonal and H1N1 vaccinations. The site is: http://www.nyhealth.gov/diseases/communicable/influenza/vaccination_clinics/

###