

Ulster County Weekly H1N1 Update - Summary Released: 6 –Nov. 09

- The Ulster County Health Department (UCHD) continues to see widespread influenza-like illness (ILI) reported by health care providers, Emergency Departments, & schools in Ulster County.
- Healthcare providers in Ulster County who registered to receive H1N1 vaccine have begun receiving relatively small shipments from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). However, it is anticipated that greater quantities will soon be available to vaccinate individuals in the target groups.
- According to the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) the following groups should receive the vaccine before others:
 - pregnant women
 - people who live with or care for children younger than 6 months of age
 - health care and emergency medical services personnel with direct patient contact
 - children 6 months through 4 years of age,
 - children, especially those younger than 5 years of age and those who have high risk medical conditions are at increased risk of influenza-related complications.
- Residents who are in the target 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.
- The majority of H1N1 vaccine will continue to be delivered to healthcare providers for administration to patients in their practices. Consequently, the UCHD will not be receiving adequate amounts of vaccine to conduct public H1N1 flu vaccination clinics at this time.
- When vaccine is available, UCHD will hold public clinics to complement the vaccination being done by healthcare providers. When supply becomes available the schedule will be released.
- Those experiencing mild illness do not need to go to a hospital emergency department. Most people with the flu have mild to moderate symptoms and recover at home without medical treatment.
- However, there are times when it is appropriate to seek medical treatment. Any individuals experiencing severe or worsening symptoms should immediately contact their health care providers or go to a hospital.

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 seasonal 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 11/6/09**

Influenza Monitoring:

The Ulster County Health Department (UCHD) continues to see widespread influenza-like illness (ILI) reported by health care providers, Emergency Departments, & schools in Ulster County. Emergency departments have reported increased visits since last week due to influenza-like illness. A majority of patients are children and adults with mild to moderate flu like symptoms and 95% of cases are not admitted. The hospitals are coping with the increase in patients without any additional interventions. Many schools are reporting significant rates of absenteeism and have taken proper infection control measures. However, 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.

Status of Prevention Efforts:

Flu Vaccination Information:

The NYS DOH established an H1N1 vaccine ordering process that went into effect mid-October. This enabled registered health care providers to place orders for H1N1 vaccine for their patients. Healthcare providers in Ulster County who registered to receive H1N1 vaccine have begun receiving relatively small shipments from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). As national H1N1 vaccine supplies continue to be limited due to production delays, it is expected that each healthcare provider will receive far less than the amount they ordered. However, it is anticipated that greater quantities will soon be available to vaccinate individuals in the target groups. According to the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) the following groups should receive the vaccine before others:

- pregnant women
- people who live with or care for children younger than 6 months of age
- health care and emergency medical services personnel with direct patient contact
- children 6 months through 4 years of age,
- children, especially those younger than 5 years of age and those who have high risk medical conditions are at increased risk of influenza-related complications.

Residents who are in the target 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.

Ulster County Weekly Update

The majority of H1N1 vaccine will continue to be delivered to healthcare providers for administration to patients in their practices. Consequently, the UCHD will not be receiving adequate amounts of vaccine to conduct public H1N1 flu vaccination clinics at this time. When vaccine is available, UCHD will hold public clinics to complement the vaccination being done by healthcare providers. When supply becomes available the schedule will be released.

There does not appear to be any more encouraging news about supplies of *seasonal* flu vaccine. As noted last week, it is uncertain if more vaccine will become available for the 2009-2010 season. You can visit <http://www.flucliniclocator.org/> to see if there are any seasonal flu vaccine clinics scheduled at retail outlets near you. Also, when you check with your provider about H1N1 vaccine, inquire about seasonal vaccine as well.

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.

Public Information: Seeking Medical Treatment: Those experiencing mild illness do not need to go to a hospital emergency department. Most people with the flu have mild to moderate symptoms and recover at home without medical treatment.

However, there are times when it is appropriate to seek medical treatment. Any individuals experiencing severe or worsening symptoms should immediately contact their health care providers or go to a hospital.

Signs that medical treatment may be needed for children include:

- Fast breathing or trouble breathing
- Refusing to drink fluids
- Severe vomiting or diarrhea that won't stop
- Being too irritable to be held
- Bluish skin color
- Flu-like symptoms that improve but then return with fever and worse cough
- Fever with a rash

Signs that medical treatment may be needed for adults include:

- Trouble breathing or shortness of breath
- Pain or pressure in the chest or stomach
- Sudden dizziness
- Confusion
- Severe vomiting that won't stop
- Flu-like symptoms that improve but then return with fever and worse cough

It is recommended that individuals at higher risk for serious illness and complications from the flu contact their health care provider at the first sign of the flu to see if it is

Ulster County Weekly Update

appropriate for them to be prescribed an antiviral medicine, such as Tamiflu, which can reduce the severity of the flu.

Those at higher risk of serious illness and complications from the flu are:

- Pregnant women, as well as women who have given birth or had a miscarriage or abortion in the past 2 weeks
- Children younger than 5 years of age, especially children younger than 2 years of age
- People 65 years and older
- People with respiratory conditions, including asthma, chronic lung disease, or chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD)
- People with other underlying health conditions, including cancer, heart disease, diabetes, blood disorders, kidney disorders, liver disorders, neurological disorders, neuromuscular disorders (including muscular dystrophy and multiple sclerosis)
- People with weakened immune systems (including those with HIV/AIDS)
- People under 19 years who are on long-term aspirin therapy

Individuals who belong to one of these higher risk groups should also contact their health care provider if they are in close contact with someone with the flu; their health care provider may prescribe antiviral medicine to help prevent the flu.

###