



**CABINET FOR HEALTH AND FAMILY SERVICES
DEPARTMENT FOR PUBLIC HEALTH**

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Janie Miller
Secretary

August 28, 2009

Dear Kentucky Clinician:

The ongoing outbreak of novel influenza A (H1N1) continues to expand during the summer months, causing illness, hospitalizations, and deaths in the US. The Kentucky Department for Public Health and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) are concerned that the new H1N1 flu virus could result in a particularly severe flu season this year. A novel H1N1 vaccine is currently in production and may be ready for administration to the public in the fall. The novel H1N1 vaccine is not intended to replace the seasonal flu vaccine – it is intended to be used along-side seasonal flu vaccine. CDC is recommending providers begin vaccinating against seasonal influenza as soon as vaccines become available. The novel H1N1 vaccine will be government-purchased vaccine so it will be distributed through a different mechanism than usual and providers will not be charged for receipt of the vaccine.

Your practice most likely sees patients that fall into one or more of the priority groups recommended to receive the novel H1N1 vaccine (see below). The Kentucky Department for Public Health (KDPH) is requesting the assistance of Kentucky clinicians in providing the vaccination against novel H1N1 when vaccine becomes available. We encourage all clinicians and practices to consider participating, especially those who carry a high patient load of the priority groups identified below. To give us an indication of your practice's willingness to participate in this important vaccination campaign, please log onto: <https://khelps.chfs.ky.gov> and fill in the requested information. Only one registration per facility is needed so please coordinate with other providers in your practice as needed. On the website, we ask for an estimate of the number of doses your practice might administer – keep in mind that this is only a “best guess” and is not meant to be binding.

In the interest of transparency we want to be clear that distribution of vaccine will be based on a number of factors, not all of which are available at this time, so registration is not a guarantee of receipt of vaccine, just your willingness to provide novel H1N1 vaccination. All providers who register will be updated regarding novel H1N1 vaccine distribution and administration as more information becomes available.

CDC's Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) met on July 29, to consider who should receive novel H1N1 influenza vaccine. The ACIP considered several factors, including current disease patterns, populations most at-risk for severe illness based on current trends in illness, hospitalizations and deaths, how much vaccine is expected to be available, and the timing of vaccine availability.

The groups recommended to first receive the novel H1N1 influenza vaccine include:

- 1) **Pregnant women** - higher risk of H1N1 complications. Vaccine can also potentially provide immunity and protection to infants less than six months of age who cannot be vaccinated;
- 2) **Household contacts and caregivers for children younger than 6 months of age** - younger infants are at higher risk of complications from the H1N1 virus but cannot be vaccinated. Vaccination of those in close contact with infants <6 months should help protect them by “cocooning” them from the virus;
- 3) **Healthcare and emergency medical services personnel** - infections among healthcare workers have been reported and they can be a potential source of infection for vulnerable patients. Also, increased absenteeism in this population could reduce healthcare system capacity;
- 4) **All people from 6 months through 24 years of age**
 - **Children from 6 months through 18 years of age** - there have been many cases of novel H1N1 influenza in children, and they are in close contact with each other in school and day care settings, which increases the likelihood of disease spread;
 - **Young adults 19 through 24 years of age** - there have been many cases of novel H1N1 influenza in these healthy young adults and they often live, work, and study in close proximity, and they are a frequently mobile population;
- 5) **Persons aged 25 through 64 years who have health conditions associated with higher risk of medical complications from influenza.**

CDC does not expect that there will be a shortage of novel H1N1 vaccine, but vaccine availability and demand can be unpredictable. The ACIP made recommendations regarding which people within the at-risk groups listed above should be prioritized if the vaccine is initially available in limited quantities. We will provide those who are registered with regular updates and communications regarding this as the situation evolves.

Once again, if your practice is considering administering novel H1N1 vaccine, please register the practice at <https://khelps.chfs.ky.gov>. The novel H1N1 vaccine will be supplied free of charge to your practice by CDC through KDPH. The process is expected to be very similar to the method used by the Vaccines for Children (VFC) program. As with the VFC program, clinicians will be expected to sign a provider agreement with KDPH. Providers will be allowed to charge an administration fee, if you desire, and this will be detailed in our provider agreement. There is a worksheet provided below to help assess the number of doses you will need based on the distribution of the novel H1N1 priority populations in your practice setting. The vaccine is projected to be administered to all recipients as a two-dose series; please be aware of this as you determine the number of doses based on patients that would fall into each of the priority groups as well as the number of staff you have to vaccinate.

Thank you for your attention to this issue and your consideration of our request.

Sincerely,



William D. Hacker, MD, FAAP, CPE
Commissioner

Novel H1N1 Influenza Vaccine Worksheet

RISK GROUPS	NUMBER OF DOSES NEEDED FOR EACH RISK GROUP (@ 2 doses/person)
Pregnant women:	
Household contacts and caregivers for children younger than 6 months of age:	
Healthcare and emergency medical services personnel:	
Persons aged 6 months through 24 years	
Persons aged 25 through 64 years who have health conditions associated with higher risk of medical complications from influenza:	
TOTAL NUMBER OF DOSES NEEDED:	