

Preparing to Vaccinate Against Pandemic H1N1

Pandemic H1N1 influenza vaccine will be available through the auspices of state and some local health departments, including the Los Angeles County Department of Public Health (LAC DPH), in mid-October as part of a national voluntary vaccination program. Private and non-profit health care providers throughout Los Angeles County are encouraged to participate in this program and provide Pandemic H1N1 flu vaccine to their patients to protect them against this infectious disease.

The pandemic H1N1 vaccine will be manufactured by the five influenza vaccine manufacturers that are licensed to produce seasonal vaccine for the U.S. market. It will be available in preservative-free (no thimerosal) as well as preservative containing formulations. It will also be available as a nasally administered product.

Priority Groups for Pandemic H1N1 Vaccination

The Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) has identified the following priority groups to receive the Pandemic H1N1 vaccine:

- All persons 6 months through 24 years of age
- People who live with or care for infants younger than 6 months of age
- All pregnant women
- Health care and emergency services personnel
- Persons 25 years through 64 years of age with health conditions associated with high risks for medical complications from influenza (note, persons 65 years and older are not in a priority group to receive the vaccine because they have not been as severely affected by the Pandemic H1N1 virus and studies indicate a level of pre-existing immunity)

As a reminder, while some of these priority groups overlap with the groups recommended for seasonal influenza vaccination, the priority groups for vaccination are not identical. Please visit www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/vaccination/acip.htm for additional details about the Pandemic H1N1 vaccination recommendations and www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/rr5808a1.htm?s_cid=rr5808a1_e to access the ACIP 2009-2010 seasonal flu vaccination recommendations.

Pandemic H1N1 Flu Vaccination Clinical Trials

Under direction of the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, five clinical trials of candidate Pandemic H1N1 vaccine are underway at several research centers across the nation. To learn more, visit www3.niaid.nih.gov/news/OA/vteuH1N1qa.htm. The five influenza vaccine manufacturers for the U.S. market are also conducting their own studies of the vaccine under contract with Health and Human Services. Of note, the development and testing process for Pandemic H1N1 vaccine is similar to the testing process employed annually for seasonal influenza vaccination. Thus, we can expect this process to yield sufficient safety and efficacy data needed to make a decision whether to license the pandemic vaccine for use in the U.S.

Specific administration recommendations will be released at the conclusion of the clinical trials but it is likely that two doses, separated by a minimum of 4 weeks, will be required to achieve immunity.

Pandemic H1N1 Flu Vaccine will be available at no charge for eligible providers.

The LAC DPH will make a sizable portion of the Los Angeles County vaccine allocation available for direct shipment to private and non-profit providers who wish to participate in a public/private partnership to ensure Pandemic H1N1 vaccine access to the priority groups.

- Free vaccine (minimum amount, 100 doses), along with supplies required for vaccine administration such as safety syringes, alcohol swabs, and sharps disposal containers, will be available to participating providers.
- Participating providers must adhere to appropriate vaccine storage and handling guidelines and ensure that the vaccine is kept between 35 degrees through 46 degrees F. It must never be frozen.
- Participating providers must account for all vaccine doses received by reporting weekly on aggregate age groups vaccinated and whether the dose was the first or second dose.
- Participating providers will be eligible to receive a vaccine administration fee from L.A. Care Health Plan or its Plan Partners (Kaiser, Anthem Blue Cross, Community Health Plan and Care1st) dependent upon the member’s eligibility. Please verify eligibility and forward the claim for the administration fee to the appropriate financial party as designated by the member’s Health Plan.

To prevent flu complications, take advantage of office visits to vaccinate your patients against seasonal flu and pneumococcal disease.



Seasonal influenza vaccine continues to be recommended this year for the same groups that were recommended to receive it in the 2008-2009 flu season. Seasonal influenza vaccine is available to providers through the sources from which they normally receive it. Please be sure that you have placed an order with your vaccine distributors or vaccine manufacturers to accommodate your at-risk patients.

Health care providers should emphasize the use of the currently-available pneumococcal polysaccharide vaccine (PPSV) to vaccinate the groups recommended by ACIP to receive it. Pneumococcal vaccination educational tools and resources for use in your practice will be available starting in September at www.publichealth.lacounty.gov.

Enroll in the LAC DPH Pandemic H1N1 flu vaccine ordering system today to request vaccine.

- Visit www.publichealth.lacounty.gov/H1N1Vaccine to enroll.
- For updates on Pandemic H1N1 Flu, visit www.publichealth.lacounty.gov.

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