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H1N1 (Swine) FLU UPDATE **Friday, October 2, 2009**

Flu Surveillance

The Albany County Department of Health (ACDOH) continues to see low levels of influenza like illness (probable H1N1) cases reported in our county. Currently, no significant increase in flu cases has been detected. Pharmacies continue to report an increase in the sale of over-the-counter (OTC) flu products, but there has been no significant increase in emergency department visits for flu or flu-like symptoms. ACDOH 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. Twenty-six states are reporting widespread influenza activity. In New York State, influenza activity was considered to be at the local level for the week ending September 19, 2009. In Albany County, the University at Albany reports seeing 1-3 students (out of a total student population of 18,000 students) per day with influenza like illness (ILI). Beginning September 30, 2009, the University at Albany will be submitting two specimens per week from symptomatic students to Wadsworth Lab for H1N1 testing. In Rensselaer County, several students at RPI developed ILI and have recovered. No H1N1 testing was conducted on the ill students.

Flu Vaccination Information

- New York State Department of Health officially ordered their first shipment of H1N1 vaccine from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) on September 30, 2009. A very small amount of this vaccine in the nasal spray form will go to local health departments, hospitals, and federally qualified health centers. Arrival of this very small amount is not expected until late next week or early the following week. Pre-registered providers will likely receive vaccine soon thereafter. Providers should plan for receipt of portions of their order over time as vaccine will come out in increments and will be shipped weekly or more over the next few months.
- Individuals in the priority groups (<http://www.flu.gov/individualfamily/vaccination/index.html#priority>) are strongly encouraged to get vaccinated as soon as the H1N1 vaccine becomes available. We will provide details on where to go to receive the vaccine, as information becomes available.
- Individuals 10 years and older will only need **one dose** of H1N1 vaccine. Those younger will require **two doses** (vaccine dosing will vary by manufacturer).

- Health care providers can still pre-register their practices to receive H1N1 vaccine to be administered to their patients and staff. To do so, please visit the following website: <https://hcsteamwork1.health.state.ny.us/pub>. For those providers who have already pre-registered, you can expect to receive notification from the New York State Department of Health shortly of the need to sign a Provider Agreement and officially order vaccine (to verify that what was pre-ordered is still accurate).
- As a reminder, pharmacists can also still pre-register to obtain vaccine at the above website.
- Although there continues to be a delay in receipt of *seasonal* flu vaccine for some providers, we have been notified that the New York State “Vaccine for Children” vaccine supply has been released and is being shipped to providers. As was mentioned in our last update, it is still early in the season. Please be patient. **There is still plenty of time to receive the seasonal flu vaccine.** You may contact your health care provider or visit www.albanycounty.com/health for more information about *seasonal* flu clinics.

Public Information

“Plan to Keep Your Business in Business this Flu Season”

“Imagine that 10 percent of your employees are too sick to come to work on any given day. Imagine that over the course of several months to a year 15 percent or more of your workforce is absent for weeks. Imagine that the other businesses you rely on are facing the same massive absentee rates...the H1N1 flu could disrupt your business.

In communities where H1N1 flu circulated this past spring, the infection rate was roughly six percent to eight percent over a three- to four-week period. During the winter season, infection rates could be two to three times higher, as both the H1N1 flu and the seasonal flu circulate and could sicken people simultaneously. Influenza is difficult to predict, and so is determining future absenteeism scenarios. Still, employers need to know what their normal attendance rates are, so that if absenteeism rises above a certain threshold they can escalate tracking employee health and wellness and taking an array of steps to protect their business.

Absenteeism will likely be the central issue that businesses wrestle with during this pandemic – whether the outlook is similar to spring 2009, causing relatively minimal effects, or more widespread and severe, having more prolonged impacts. Businesses should focus on reducing the transmission of the H1N1 flu in the workplace, keeping employees healthy, and maintaining business continuity.” (Source: Trust for America’s Health, www.healthyamericans.org)

Visit <http://www.flu.gov/professional/business/index.html> for more information on how to prepare your business for flu season.

If you would like to be removed from this list please e-mail BeReady@AlbanyCounty.com and insert “Remove from Weekly Update” in subject line.

Other resources for more information about seasonal flu and H1N1 flu:

The Albany County Department of Health
www.albanycounty.com/health

Call Albany County’s 24-hour automated flu information line at (518) 447-4505 or contact our staff at 447-4589 or 447-4648 between 8:30am and 4:30pm

The New York State Department of Health H1N1 flu hotline at 1-800-808-1987

www.flu.gov