



Humboldt County
Department of Health and Human Services

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Date: December 3, 2009

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H1N1 Influenza media update, 12/03/09

Vaccine status

Humboldt County providers have received 30,390 doses of H1N1 Influenza vaccine, enough to vaccinate approximately 23 percent of county residents, with another 6,000 doses expected in the next few weeks. Demand for the vaccine nationwide continues to exceed production, which makes it difficult still to pinpoint delivery dates.

The Public Health Branch of the Department of Health and Human Services has distributed vaccines to local hospitals, pediatricians, obstetricians, clinics and physicians' offices as the vaccine has arrived. Many providers have also received shipments directly from the state.

Department staff have administered vaccine to more than 4,000 elementary schoolchildren countywide, and contract providers vaccinated 1,600 young adults at Humboldt State University and College of the Redwoods.

Both groups are considered by the Centers for Disease Control to be at higher risk for H1N1, as are pregnant women, caretakers of infants too young to be vaccinated, medical services providers, and anyone under the age of 65 with certain pre-existing chronic health conditions.

Among the younger students, the vaccination or uptake rate was 46 percent. Uptake rates at HSU and CR were 20 and 26 percent respectively.

The school-based vaccination program will continue through the middle of December, with local high schools next in line.

In November, the Centers for Disease Control issued a recommendation advising people in the identified risk groups to try to get both H1N1 and seasonal flu vaccines. Unfortunately, production of H1N1 vaccine has significantly disrupted production of seasonal flu vaccine, and both vaccines are in short supply.

The Public Health Branch has a small remaining stock of seasonal flu vaccine specifically for pregnant women. For additional information, phone 445-6200.

All residents are encouraged again to take common-sense steps to prevent infection. Wash your hands, cover your cough, and stay home from school or work if you're sick.

Local H1N1 trends and statistics

The number of visits to outpatient clinics and emergency rooms for people with influenza-like illness has declined slightly since a peak in November. However, hospital visits are still two to three times higher than in previous years. There was one new hospitalization this week.

School absences, which Public Health has tracked since 2004, reached a peak of 3 percent in October and have now declined to around 1.5 percent, a rate considered normal.

Since April, 46 people hospitalized in the county have tested positive for H1N1. Fifteen of those were treated in an intensive care unit. Testing for H1N1 continues only for those hospitalized with influenza-like illness.

The age range for hospitalized H1N1 patients locally is one year to 81 years, with an average age of 49.

To date, three people with H1N1 have died in Humboldt County, two of whom were residents of the county.

Statewide, 7,268 severe cases have been reported, including 366 resulting in death. The median age for hospitalization due to H1N1 in California is 34. The average fatality age is 42.

The California Department of Public Health reports that of the severe cases, 2,622 including 42 deaths were among pediatric patients less than 18 years old. The rate of hospitalization remains highest among children younger than one year.

CDPH additionally reports that almost all specimens testing positive for Influenza-A have been subsequently confirmed as H1N1 Influenza, which indicates the predominant circulating influenza strain remains H1N1.