

# Commonwealth of Pennsylvania



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH  
HARRISBURG

Dear Provider:

The first doses of pandemic influenza A/H1N1 vaccine will soon be made available by the federal government for distribution in the United States, including Pennsylvania. The initial supplies of vaccine will be very limited in number, but are expected to rapidly increase in quantity throughout October and November. Based on the current information from the CDC, the first orders will be placed on September 30th, and then the manufacturers are expected to begin delivering vaccine for distribution on a weekly basis. By mid-November, all providers who have been certified (registered and signed provider agreement) to deliver pandemic H1N1 vaccine in Pennsylvania should be able to order and administer it for patients in the five priority vaccination groups.

However, because of the limited nature of the initial vaccine supplies, these doses will need to be highly focused in their distribution and use. The Pennsylvania Department of Health (PADOH) has developed criteria to decide how best to utilize the vaccine supply. These criteria include:

- The type of vaccine available and the indications for the use of available vaccine
- ACIP recommendations:
  - Pregnant women
  - Individuals six months to 24 years of age
  - Healthcare providers and emergency medical services personnel
  - Individuals who provide care for children under six months of age
  - People under age 65 with underlying medical conditions.
- Maximizing impact using epidemiologic disease patterns (who is most affected and where is disease occurring) to control disease and reduce influenza complications

The federal government has indicated that the first available vaccine doses will be exclusively live attenuated influenza vaccine (LAIV). This vaccine is indicated for use primarily in healthy persons between the ages of 2-49 years. It is not indicated for pregnant women, persons with certain underlying health conditions, and health care workers who deal with severely immune suppressed persons.

The current epidemiology of pandemic H1N1 disease in Pennsylvania shows that the demographic patterns are similar to those of the first wave that occurred in the Spring. More than 70 percent of all illness is occurring in children and young adults between the ages of 5-24

years. Disease spread appears to be largely driven by transmission in these age groups in aggregate settings, especially primary schools and higher education. Both settings have already experienced disease outbreaks in some locations. Disease surveillance also demonstrates that while illness is occurring throughout the Commonwealth, currently it is more frequent in the southwest, southeast, and north central areas of the state.

PADOH anticipates that disease activity in the coming weeks will continue to increase in schools and institutions of higher education. We also know that children are the most efficient transmitters of influenza to their families and to the general community. Furthermore, because children under 10 years of age will require two doses of pandemic influenza H1N1 vaccine (ideally given 28 days apart but a minimum of 21 days apart), PADOH believes it is very important to initiate vaccination of this population as early as possible.

Therefore, based upon the vaccine type and patterns of disease, PADOH will target the initial doses of LAIV primarily to school children between the ages of 5-9 years. A smaller proportion of the available supply may be used for college students in settings where disease outbreaks have occurred and are ongoing. Efforts will be made to distribute vaccine to the three areas of the state that are experiencing the highest numbers of cases of disease, namely the southeast, southwest and north central districts.

Please note that PADOH expects additional doses of vaccine to be made available by the federal government in the coming weeks and expects approximately 2.5 million doses by the end of October. This includes both the single dose, preservative free inactivated vaccine for use in the youngest targeted groups and the multi-dose vials of inactivated vaccine for use in other priority groups. While injectable inactivated vaccine can be used in all five priority groups, it is important to note that each of the three currently licensed inactivated products are targeted to different age groups. It will be very important to know which vaccine you are ordering and receiving and the licensed indications for that specific product. At the same time inactivated vaccine is being distributed, more shipments of LAIV will also be available. This will assure that those who require two doses of vaccine can receive the second dose of LAIV, and that vaccination coverage can be extended to other groups of healthy individuals (e.g. school children age 10 years and over).

We appreciate your assistance in agreeing to register as a vaccine provider. The response by providers throughout Pennsylvania has been exceptional and assures the vaccine will be widely available throughout the state. If you have not yet completed and returned the vaccine provider agreement (with your physician license number) and the vaccine user agreements, please do so immediately. These forms must be completed and returned prior to placing an order for H1N1 vaccine. We now need your cooperation in assuring the vaccine reaches individuals in the prioritized groups, especially early in the process, as this makes the greatest impact on reducing disease transmission and protecting individuals at higher risk of influenza complications.

H1N1 Provider Letter  
September 29, 2009  
Page 3

If you have any questions about this information, please visit the pre-registration link at [www.H1N1inPA.com](http://www.H1N1inPA.com) or call 1-877-PA-HEALTH.

Sincerely,

Stephen Ostroff, MD  
Acting Physician General

Quick Reference Chart – Roles and Responsibilities

	PA DOH – Central Office	PA DOH District Offices & State Health Centers, County/Municipal Health Departments	Local Jurisdictions
<b>Preparedness</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>General health policy</li> <li>Conduct disease surveillance and epidemiology</li> <li>Develop and disseminate health and risk communications messages</li> <li>Encourage participation in and maintain SERVPA</li> <li>Maintain in-state stockpile of medications and medical supplies</li> <li>Develop and facilitate vaccine distribution plan</li> <li>Train and exercise staff</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Participate in local influenza pandemic planning, training, and exercises</li> <li>Work with healthcare community in preparedness planning</li> <li>Consider needs of vulnerable populations</li> <li>Work with local jurisdictions to plan for isolation, quarantine, and other community disease containment measures</li> <li>Participate in public education efforts</li> <li>Train and exercise staff</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Develop and maintain relationship with public health agency serving the jurisdiction</li> <li>Establish and maintain a pandemic planning committee</li> <li>Consider development of jurisdictional influenza pandemic plan</li> <li>Aid in development of mass vaccination plans</li> <li>Make sure influenza pandemic issues are incorporated into continuity of operations/ government plans</li> <li>Train and exercise staff</li> </ul>
<b>Response</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Conduct disease surveillance and epidemiology</li> <li>Develop and disseminate health and risk communications messages</li> <li>Provide recommendations for community mitigation strategies</li> <li>Issue isolation/quarantine orders for those jurisdictions under the PA DOH</li> <li>Monitor health status of individuals in isolation/quarantine</li> <li>Distribute vaccines and antivirals</li> <li>Provide assistance and support for vaccination campaigns</li> <li>Provide resources to support local medical surge (staffing through SERVPA, portable hospital, MSECs)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Investigate disease outbreaks</li> <li>Monitor school absenteeism rates</li> <li>Coordinate distribution of vaccines and antivirals within the District</li> <li>Assist in dissemination of public information and education materials</li> <li>As available and requested, provide ESF-8 liaison to county emergency management agencies</li> <li>Provide support to vulnerable populations</li> <li>(County and Municipal Health Departments are responsible for issuing isolation/quarantine orders in their jurisdiction)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Assist public health agency in identifying and alerting priority groups for vaccines or antivirals</li> <li>Provide local security support</li> <li>Assist in providing support services to persons in isolation/quarantine in their homes</li> <li>Assist in implementing community mitigation measures</li> <li>Assist in operation of mass vaccination sites</li> <li>Assist public health agency to identify and provide support to members of vulnerable populations</li> <li>Coordinate provision of behavioral health support through DCORT teams</li> </ul>