

Regional Emergency Support Function 15 – External Affairs Information Update



Event: **H1N1 Influenza**

Report Date / Time: Sept. 16, 2009, 3:30 p.m.

SITUATION UPDATE

Each week CDC analyzes information about influenza disease activity in the United States and publishes findings of key flu indicators in a report called FluView (<http://www.cdc.gov/flu/weekly/>). During the week of Aug. 30-Sept. 5, 2009, a review of the key indicators found that influenza activity increased in the United States compared to the prior weeks. Below is a summary of the most recent key indicators:

- Visits to doctors for influenza-like illness (ILI) are increasing nationally. Visits to doctors for influenza-like illness are higher than what is expected during this time of year and have increased over the last four weeks.
- Total influenza hospitalization rates for adults and children are similar to or lower than seasonal influenza hospitalization rates depending on age group, but are higher than expected in the summer months.
- The proportion of deaths attributed to pneumonia and influenza (P&I) was low and within the bounds of what is expected in the summer.
- Eleven states (Alaska, Arizona, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, Maryland, Mississippi, North Carolina, Oklahoma, South Carolina and Tennessee) and Guam are reporting widespread influenza activity at this time. Any reports of widespread influenza activity in August and September are very unusual.
- Almost all of the influenza viruses identified were 2009 H1N1 influenza A viruses. These 2009 H1N1 viruses remain similar to the viruses chosen for the 2009 H1N1 vaccine, and remain susceptible to antiviral drugs (oseltamivir and zanamivir) with rare exception.

<http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/update.htm>

BUSINESS PREPAREDNESS

Secretary Napolitano Announces H1N1 Preparedness Guide for Small Businesses

Department of Homeland Security (DHS) Secretary Janet Napolitano joined Small Business Administration (SBA) Administrator Karen Mills and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Influenza Division Deputy Director Daniel Jernigan on Sept. 14 to announce a preparedness guide to assist small businesses in planning for the H1N1 flu. “Small businesses play an essential role in our national effort to prepare for all disasters and emergencies—including the H1N1 flu,” said Secretary Napolitano. “This guide will help America’s small businesses maintain continuity of operations and resiliency as the fall flu season approaches.”

Outbreaks of H1N1 flu are occurring now across the country and will likely coincide with the return of seasonal flu this fall and winter. The preparedness guide offers small business employers tools and information to help them plan for and respond flexibly to varying levels of severity of an H1N1 outbreak—which may lead to increased absenteeism, and, if the outbreak becomes more severe, may include restricted service capabilities and supply chain disruptions. Additional preparations may be necessary if a more serious outbreak evolves during the fall and winter.

Employers are encouraged to put strategies in place now to protect their employees and their businesses in advance of the fall flu season. Included in the preparedness guide are tips on how to write a continuity of operations plan, steps for keeping employees healthy, frequently asked questions about the 2009 H1N1 flu and a list of additional resources that employers can access online. For more information and to view the preparedness guide, visit www.flu.gov.

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Harvard study: Most Companies Not Ready for H1N1 Flu

A Harvard University study has found that many American businesses are unprepared to deal with widespread employee absenteeism during a swine flu outbreak. The Harvard School of Public Health study, released on Sept. 9, found that two-thirds of the more than 1,000 businesses surveyed nationwide said they could not maintain normal operations if half their workers were out for two weeks. Four out of every five expect severe problems if half their workers are out for a month. The survey also found that while 74 percent of businesses offer paid sick leave for employees, only 35 percent of businesses offer paid leave that would allow employees to take care of sick family members, and even fewer would allow paid time off to care for children if schools/daycares were closed (21 percent).

http://1.pr/a43t0/Harvard_Study

Complete Survey: http://www.hsph.harvard.edu/news/press-releases/files/H1N1_Topline_9.9.09_Final.doc

VACCINE / ANTIVIRALS

NIAID Launches 2009 H1N1 Influenza Vaccine Trial in Pregnant Women

The first trial testing a candidate 2009 H1N1 influenza vaccine in pregnant women launched last week, the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases (NIAID), part of the National Institutes of Health, announced on Sept. 9. Up to 120 women 18 to 39 years of age who are in their second or third trimester (14 to 34 weeks) of pregnancy will be enrolled into this initial trial. Volunteers will receive 15 micrograms or 30 micrograms of a candidate 2009 H1N1 influenza vaccine manufactured by Sanofi Pasteur. All women will receive an initial injection and a second injection 21 days later. Safety data will be collected and assessed continuously throughout the trial by the study investigators and by an independent safety monitoring committee. Study investigators will take blood samples to determine how the immune system responds to the vaccine (for example, by producing antibodies) at set time points before and following each injection. Because the vaccine contains inactivated virus, it is impossible to become infected with the 2009 H1N1 influenza virus by receiving this vaccine. The trial is taking place at the following six medical centers: Baylor College of Medicine VTEU in Houston; Group Health Cooperative Center for Health Studies VTEU in Seattle; Saint Louis University VTEU; Vanderbilt University VTEU in Nashville; Duke University in Durham, N.C.; and Scott and White Memorial Hospital and Clinic in Temple, Tex.

Detailed information about this study can be found on the ClinicalTrials.gov Web site: [http://clinicaltrials.gov/H1N1Vaccine in Pregnant Women NCT0093430](http://clinicaltrials.gov/H1N1Vaccine%20in%20Pregnant%20Women%20NCT0093430)

(<http://www.clinicaltrials.gov/ct2/show/NCT00963430?term=NCT00963430&rank=1>)

Visit www.flu.gov for one-stop access to U.S. government information on avian and pandemic influenza. A www.flu.gov Webcast on H1N1 and pregnant women featuring NIAID Director Dr. Anthony S. Fauci is available at <http://www.flu.gov/news/knowwhattodo.html#082709>.

NIAID's flu Web portal: <http://www3.niaid.nih.gov/topics/Flu/>

<http://www.nih.gov/news/health/sep2009/niaid-09.htm>

Antiviral Drugs Should Be Used Cautiously to Fight Flu

Most people won't need medicines like Tamiflu or Relenza, according to CDC

Antiviral medications such as Tamiflu and Relenza, which are effective in treating the H1N1 swine flu, should be taken only by people hospitalized with the flu or those at high risk for complications from the disease, U.S. health officials said on Sept. 8. Those at risk include people with underlying health conditions, such as asthma or diabetes, as well as the very young, the elderly and pregnant women, officials said. Because the H1N1 swine flu remains mild for the vast majority of people who get it, most people won't need these medications at all, according to new guidelines for antiviral drug use issued by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. The new guidelines also recommend that, when high-risk people have been in contact with someone who has the H1N1 swine flu, doctors should wait to see if flu symptoms develop before starting treatment with antivirals. The first 45 million doses of the vaccine are expected by mid-October.

SOURCE: *Sept. 8, 2009, teleconference with Anne Schuchat, M.D., director, National Center for Immunization and Respiratory Diseases, U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Atlanta*

http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/news/fullstory_89111.html

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General Questions and Answers on 2009 H1N1 Influenza A Vaccine Safety

- Will the 2009 H1N1 influenza vaccines be safe? We expect the 2009 H1N1 influenza vaccine to have a similar safety profile as seasonal flu vaccines, which have a very good safety track record. Over the years, hundreds of millions of Americans have received seasonal flu vaccines. The most common side effects following flu vaccinations are mild, such as soreness, redness, tenderness or swelling where the shot was given. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) will be closely monitoring for any signs that the vaccine is causing unexpected adverse events and we will work with state and local health officials to investigate any unusual events.
- Are there any side effects to the 2009 H1N1 influenza vaccine? CDC expects that any side effects following vaccination with the 2009 H1N1 influenza vaccine would be rare. If side effects occur, they will likely be similar to those experienced following seasonal influenza vaccine. Mild problems that may be experienced include soreness, redness, or swelling where the shot was given, fainting (mainly adolescents), headache, muscle aches, fever, and nausea. If these problems occur, they usually begin soon after the shot and last 1-2 days. Life-threatening allergic reactions to vaccines are very rare. If they do occur, it is usually within a few minutes to a few hours after the shot is given.
- Are there some people who should not receive this vaccine? People who have a severe (life-threatening) allergy to chicken eggs or to any other substance in the vaccine should not be vaccinated.

Additional questions and answers can be found on the CDC Web site at:

http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/vaccination/vaccine_safety_qa.htm

Questions and Answers about the Updated Antiviral Recommendations

On September 8, 2009 CDC updated its recommendations for the use of influenza antiviral medicines to provide additional guidance for clinicians in prescribing antiviral medicines for treatment and prevention (chemoprophylaxis) of influenza during the upcoming 2009-2010 flu season. These recommendations are intended to help clinicians prioritize use of antiviral drugs for treatment and prevention of influenza. In general, the priority for the use of antiviral medications this season continues to be in persons at increased risk of influenza-related complications as outlined in the antiviral recommendations posted on May 6, 2009.

<http://www.flu.gov/vaccine/antiviralfaq.html>

SOCIAL MEDIA

2009 Flu Prevention PSA Contest – Voting Ends Today

Vote until 11:59 p.m. EDT tonight, Wednesday, Sept. 16, for your favorite video and help decide the winner of the Flu.gov PSA contest. The winner gets \$2,500 and will be featured on national television. The dates for voting used to be Aug. 29 through Sept. 7, however, given the Labor Day Holiday and a busy back to school weekend for many, federal officials decided to extend the voting period through today. For more information on H1N1 situation, please visit www.Flu.gov.

<http://www.flu.gov/psa/psacontest1.html>

H1N1 Social Media Outlets

Facebook

- <http://www.facebook.com/CDC>
- <http://www.facebook.com/pages/World-Health-Organization>
- <http://www.facebook.com/pages/GlaxoSmithKline>
- <http://www.facebook.com/Novartis.pharma>

Twitter

- @CDCEmergency – CDC Emergency Preparedness and Response
- @CDCFlu – Flu-related updates from CDC
- @FluFeed – a TweetBot focused on aggregating information about influenza

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- @FluGov – one-stop access to U.S. Government H1N1, avian and pandemic flu information
- @FluTracker – a service from Doctor’s Without Borders
- @JNWilliams76 – a risk communications contractor for the CDC
- @Novartis – a drug maker for one of the H1N1 influenza drugs
- @WHONews – World Health Organization

RSS Feeds

CDC Flu Feed: <http://www2a.cdc.gov/podcasts/download.asp?f=20&af=x&t=3>

CDC H1N1 Feed: <http://www2a.cdc.gov/podcasts/download.asp?f=252&af=x&t=3>

WHO Pandemic Feed: <http://www.who.int/feeds/entity/csr/disease/swineflu/en/rss.xml>

FEMA Social Media Outlets

- Twitter: www.twitter.com/femainfocus
- YouTube: www.youtube.com/fema
- Facebook: www.facebook.com/fema

Citizen Corps Social Media

The Federal Emergency Management Agency’s (FEMA) Community Preparedness Division has announced the addition of several new social media tools on CitizenCorps.gov, including widgets, Web banners and RSS feeds.

Citizen Corps Widgets: www.citizencorps.gov/widgets/

Widgets are web tools that can be put on your Web page, blog and social media sites. Citizen Corps’ widgets are free and display information provided by FEMA’s Community Preparedness Division through continually updated data feeds. Citizen Corps widgets are easily placed on your Web page by copying the code of the widget and placing it within the html code of your Web site’s editor. CitizenCorps.gov currently offers three widgets in several sizes:

- Citizen Corps Logo Widget
- Community Preparedness News Widget
- Are You Ready? Widget

Citizen Corps Web Banners: www.citizencorps.gov/councils/banners.shtm

Web banners are graphic files that can be used by individuals to link from their Web site to CitizenCorps.gov. These banners are free and are available in several styles and sizes.

Citizen Corps RSS Feeds: www.citizencorps.gov/rss/

RSS feeds provide subscribers with automated updated information through user-defined applications without having to continually visit CitizenCorps.gov. These RSS feeds can be imported into self-made widgets and many other social media sites. CitizenCorps.gov currently offers two RSS feeds:

- National Community Preparedness News Feed: This RSS feed provides users with the latest Community Preparedness news and events from various departments of the Federal Government and our National Citizen Corps partners and affiliates. The goal of this feed is to provide our users with one national-level feed to receive up-to-date information on individual and community preparedness issues, events, and best practices.
- Local Citizen Corps in the News Feed: This RSS feed provides users with information on activities and events of Citizen Corps Councils, partners and affiliates from across the nation. The goal of this feed is to share community preparedness and Citizen Corps best practices and lessons learned.

Citizen Corps Twitter: www.twitter.com/citizen_corps

Twitter is a Microblog that gives FEMA’s Community Preparedness Division the opportunity to provide users with specific community preparedness information in a timely manner. Current followers of the Citizen Corps account include Citizen Corps Councils and partners, the emergency management community and the general public.

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MEDIA INFORMATION

School Closures Can Slow Flu, Timing Critical: WHO (Reuters Health)

http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/news/fullstory_89288.html

Tamiflu Saves Lives of Severely Ill Flu Patients (Reuters Health)

http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/news/fullstory_89318.html

Canada's Vaccine Maker Says Single Dose of Adjuvanted Vaccine Protective (The Tye)

<http://thetyee.ca/CanadianPress/2009/09/14/Flu-Vaccine-GSK/>

“Early Show” host Harry Smith Believes He has Swine Flu (Video) (Examiner)

<http://www.examiner.com/x-11484-Boston-TV-Examiner~y2009m9d16-Early-Show-host-Harry-Smith-believes-he-has-Swine-Flu-Video>

Swine-flu Virus Resistant to Tamiflu in Alberta Case (Globe and Mail)

<http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/national/swine-flu-virus-resistant-to-tamiflu-in-alberta-case/article1289349/>

WHO: H1N1, virus “No Half Measures.” Race for Vaccines Continues (Asia News)

<http://www.asianews.it/index.php?l=en&art=16344&geo=6&size=A>

Sebelius: “Encouraging News” Regarding Swine Flu Vaccine (Washington Post)

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2009/09/11/AR2009091102609.html>

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