

Nassau County Department of Health
2009-2010 H1N1 and Seasonal Influenza Season Situation Update: October 15, 2009

1. Surveillance: Nassau County: Yesterday, Nassau County Department of Health (NCDOH) announced the death of an adult with confirmed H1N1 influenza. The resident was over the age of 65 and had serious multiple underlying medical conditions. Since H1N1 was first identified in the spring of 2009, 4 deaths in residents with confirmed H1N1 influenza have been reported.

2. Surveillance: New York State: During the week ending October 3, 2009 influenza activity was categorized as widespread. Laboratory-confirmed influenza was reported in 39 counties, including Nassau. Reports of outpatient visits for influenza-like illness were above the regional baseline.¹

3. Surveillance: U.S.: During the week ending October 3, 2009, influenza activity increased. Visits to doctors for influenza-like illness continued to increase and overall, are higher than levels expected for this time of the year. Hospitalization rates for laboratory-confirmed influenza are higher than expected for this time of year for adults and children. Additionally, the proportion of deaths attributed to pneumonia and influenza has increased and now exceeds what is normally expected at this time of year. Nineteen flu-related pediatric deaths were also reported: 16 of these deaths were confirmed H1N1 and 3 were untyped. Thirty-seven states reported widespread influenza activity, which is unusual for this time of year. Importantly, **almost all of the influenza viruses identified so far are H1N1 influenza A viruses**, are similar to the virus chosen for the H1N1 vaccine, and remain susceptible to antiviral drugs, with rare exception.

4. Influenza Hotlines and Resources:

NCDOH H1N1 Flu Call Center: 888-684-4271 and www.nassaucountyny.gov/agencies/Health/index.html

New York State Department of Health (NYSDOH) H1N1 Hotline: 800-808-1987 and www.health.state.ny.us/diseases/communicable/influenza/h1n1/

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: 800-232-4636 and www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/

5. Vaccination: Public health agencies, including NCDOH, are transitioning from the planning phase to the implementation phase for H1N1 vaccine. On October 5, NCDOH received 1000 doses of FluMist, the nasal spray for inhalation. This vaccine cannot be used by just anyone. It's indicated for people 2 years of age through 49 who do not have conditions like pregnancy or chronic medical conditions. On October 13, 2009, NCDOH received 400 doses of Fluzone in multi-dose vials of the 2009 H1N1 Inactivated Influenza Vaccine, the injectable form, manufactured by Sanofi Pasteur. NCDOH distributed the FluMist and Fluzone to Nassau County hospital-based clinics with high-priority group patients. Fluzone's multi-dose vials contain thimerosal in the amounts of 25 micrograms Mercury per 0.5 milliliters. Single dose vials that do NOT contain thimerosal will arrive in the near future. Initial target groups for H1N1 vaccination include pregnant women; persons who live with or provide care for infants aged <6 months (e.g., parents, siblings, and daycare providers; health-care and emergency medical services personnel; persons aged 6 months--24 years; and persons aged 25--64 years who have medical conditions that put them at higher risk for influenza-related complications. It is important to note that seasonal influenza vaccine will not provide protection against H1N1. All persons currently recommended for seasonal influenza vaccine should receive the seasonal vaccine. NCDOH has multi-tiered plans for distributing vaccine which will be announced in the near future.

6. What You Can Do to Stay Healthy:

- Stay informed. NCDOH's website will be updated regularly as information becomes available.
- Influenza is thought to spread mainly person-to-person through coughing or sneezing of infected people. Take everyday actions to stay healthy:
 - Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze. Throw the tissue in the trash after you use it.
 - Wash your hands often with soap and water, especially after you cough or sneeze. Alcohol-based hands cleaners are also effective.
 - Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth. Germs spread that way.
 - Stay home if you get sick. NCDOH recommends that you stay home from work or school and limit contact with others to keep from infecting them.
 - Follow public health advice regarding school closures, avoiding crowds and other social distancing measures.
 - Find healthy ways to deal with stress and anxiety.

¹ For the week ending September 26, 2009