

ISDH Long Term Care
Newsletter Issue # 10-02
January 11, 2010

In Today's Issue:

- Get Vaccinated for H1N1



Get Vaccinated

HOOSIERS REMINDED 'IT'S NOT TOO LATE TO GET THE H1N1 FLU VACCINE'

INDIANAPOLIS— During the week of January 10-16, Indiana will be joining a nationwide effort spearheaded by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to urge more Americans to get vaccinated against the 2009 H1N1 influenza virus.

"We are at a critical moment in the fight against the 2009 H1N1 influenza," said State Health Commissioner Judy Monroe, M.D. "The virus is still circulating and continues to be the predominant strain worldwide. It is definitely not too late to get the H1N1 flu vaccine.

"Hoosiers cannot become complacent about this virus," warned Dr. Monroe. "H1N1 is not going away anytime soon. And, this virus is behaving a lot like the 1957-58 Asian flu pandemic."

According to Dr. Monroe, the 1957-58 flu pandemic appeared in the United States with a series of small outbreaks over the summer of 1957. When children went back to school in the fall, they spread the disease in classrooms and brought it home to their families. Infection rates were highest among school children, young adults, and pregnant women in October 1957. By December 1957, the worst seemed to be over. However, during January and February 1958, there was another wave of illness among older Americans and ultimately the largest number of deaths was in this group.

"What we learned from the 1957-58 pandemic is influenza has the potential during a pandemic to infect one group of people first, appear to decrease, and then cause a larger number of infections in a different part of the population."

One of the many goals for National Influenza Vaccination Week is to engage people who are not yet vaccinated, hesitant about vaccination, or unsure about where to get vaccinated. Certain days during the week are designated to highlight the importance for certain groups, like seniors and individuals with chronic diseases, to get vaccinated.

So far, more than one million Hoosiers have received the H1N1 flu vaccine. Counties throughout Indiana are conducting outreach efforts and vaccination clinics this week to increase the number of Hoosiers vaccinated against H1N1. Following is a schedule of events the State Health Department is participating in during National Influenza Vaccination Week:

DAY	NATIONAL FOCUS	INDIANA EVENTS
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Monday, January 11	General audience and health care workers	H1N1 flu clinic for state employees at the Indiana Government Center. News conference with: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lieutenant Governor Becky Skillman • Deputy State Health Commissioner Loren Robertson • State Personnel Department Director Dan Hackler • Indiana Department of Homeland Security Executive Director Joe Wainscott
Tuesday, January 12	People with chronic health conditions that put them at high risk of serious influenza-related complications	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dr. Monroe participates in media event with Elkhart County Health Department in Elkhart. • Loren Robertson appears at an H1N1 flu vaccine clinic in Fort Wayne (Allen County).
Wednesday, January 13	Children, pregnant women, and caregivers of infants less than six months old	Dr. Monroe participates in media events with the Johnson County Health Department in Franklin and the Vigo County Health Department in Terre Haute.
Thursday, January 14	Young adults (19-24 years old)	Dr. Monroe will join the Marion County Health Department at a vaccine clinic at the IUPUI campus in Indianapolis.
Friday, January 15	Seniors	Dr. Monroe visits Gary City and East Chicago health departments to promote the H1N1 flu vaccine among seniors.

"We now have plenty of vaccine available, which has allowed us to change our vaccination strategy in 2010. We strongly encourage everyone, especially seniors, to seek out the vaccine."

"We are working diligently with different partners to get the vaccine out to Hoosiers, including local health departments, pharmacies, businesses, employers, and many others," added Dr. Monroe. "Local health departments will continue offering the vaccine for free to their residents. There are also plans to have H1N1 vaccines available to the public at shopping malls, airports and other public gathering sites in the coming weeks."

Information on where to get the H1N1 flu vaccine can be found at www.in.gov/flu by clicking on the Flu Shot Locator (operated by Google) or by calling 1-877-826-0011.

National Influenza Vaccination Week is a national observance that was established to highlight the importance of continuing influenza vaccination, as well as foster greater use of flu vaccine after the holiday season into January and beyond. For more information, including public service announcements, visit: www.cdc.gov/Features/FluPrevention.



The Indiana State Department of Health encourages all Hoosiers to be vaccinated against H1N1 influenza. We especially encourage seniors to receive the H1N1 vaccination. When vaccine supplies were limited, seniors were not one of the initial priority groups. There is now plenty of vaccine available and seniors should be immunized.

While we are fortunate that flu activity has declined in recent weeks, flu activity is expected to continue for months. This virus is not going away anytime soon. February and March are generally the peak influenza season. Flu experts warn that we should prepare for a possible third wave of H1N1. By receiving the H1N1 vaccination this week, there is a window of opportunity for individuals to protect against a potential new wave of influenza during the peak flu season.

While early reports suggested that some seniors may have a degree of immunity against H1N1, many seniors do not have immunity or adequate immunity. One news report last week suggested that while the incidence of H1N1 in seniors has been less than other groups, some data suggests that the death rate in seniors contracting H1N1 has been slightly higher than other groups.

Now is the time to ensure protection against influenza. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has declared this week to be National Influenza Vaccination Week. There will be numerous vaccination clinics set up around the state. Health care facilities and providers are encouraged to participate in these clinics. Health care providers may also obtain vaccine through their pharmacy for vaccination of patients, residents, staff, families, and friends.

On Friday, January 15, the focus will be on the immunization of seniors. Please help us in disseminating this important health message through outreach activities, vaccination clinics, or other events to promote H1N1 vaccination.

Terry Whitson
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For more information regarding H1N1 Influenza, please visit <http://www.in.gov/flu>.