



State of Wisconsin
Department of Health Services

Jim Doyle, Governor
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H1N1 Situation Report

October 21, 2009 at 12:00 Hours

Overview

Nationally, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) reports that influenza activity is increasing in the United States with most states reporting widespread influenza activity, including Wisconsin. Influenza activity is widespread in Wisconsin and higher than what is normally seen this time of year, with the number of cases starting to accelerate during the past two weeks.

The CDC has recently announced that the vaccine supply chain is slower than anticipated, which may delay some community vaccination clinics. However, the CDC continues to ship vaccine to states based upon population.

Some communities are beginning to host community or school-based clinics for target populations as they receive initial shipments of H1N1 vaccine, and it's anticipated more communities will begin to host additional community vaccination clinics as more of the H1N1 vaccine becomes available in the coming weeks. People will be able to call 2-1-1 to find out when their community is hosting an H1N1 or seasonal vaccine clinic.

A variety of schools across the state are reporting limited school closures, which are posted online at the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction (DPI) website at <http://dpi.wi.gov/sspw/pandemicflu.html>.

People are encouraged to follow good hygiene precautions such as hand washing, covering their cough/sneeze with their sleeve or a tissue, and staying home when ill. Call your health care provider first to determine if you should be seen by your local physician or if you should go to the ER/urgent care for treatment.

H1N1 Surveillance

Currently, influenza activity has increased in all five regions of the state and is higher than normal for this time of year. There is no indication the H1N1 virus has changed or is more severe than in the spring, although hospitalizations are on the rise due to widespread illness.

For those individuals who are ill and are tested for influenza, approximately 23% actually have influenza. This indicates that a variety of other illnesses are circulating through Wisconsin, and not all influenza-like symptoms are influenza. Of the influenza viruses circulating in the state, 99% have been confirmed as H1N1. Therefore, it is recommended that people continue to follow good hygiene protocols and receive the H1N1 vaccine as it becomes available.

Since September 1, 2009, there have been 53 hospitalizations due to H1N1 virus infection in Wisconsin. On October 15th, Monroe County reported an H1N1-related death, bringing the statewide death total to 10 since the spring.

H1N1 Vaccine Update

The CDC is supplying states with H1N1 vaccine based upon population rates. In turn, DHS distributes the weekly allocation to local and Tribal health departments and other health care providers across the state based upon local population counts.

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The CDC has recently announced that the supply chain is slower than they anticipated which may delay some community vaccination clinics. This delay has been communicated to health departments and providers. It should also be noted that initial shipments of vaccine were not expected until mid-October, so the fact that states are already receiving vaccine is helpful. The CDC will keep allocating to the states each week and DHS will keep allocating to providers based upon population size and the orders they place. As of October 20th, Wisconsin had received 245,000 doses of H1N1 vaccine in both the nasal and injectable forms.

As the health care workforce finalizes its immunizations, health care providers are moving on to immunizing additional target groups including pregnant women, household contacts and caregivers for children less than 6 months of age, all people from 6 months through 24 years of age, and persons age 25-64 with conditions associated with higher risk of complications from influenza.

A variety of communities have begun announcing public vaccination clinics in October. It is recommended that communities wait to schedule community or school-based clinics until they have enough H1N1 vaccine to serve their target populations. Therefore, immunization clinics may happen at a variety of dates until there is enough vaccine for everyone who wishes to receive it.

DHS Activities

DHS continues to staff a call center for health professionals pertaining to vaccine ordering questions and information. DHS also continues to host weekly webcasts for health professionals statewide and issue updated guidance as needed. A conference call for other partners will be held on Thursday, October 22nd.

School Closures

The Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction (DPI) announced that after October 21st, superintendents will have the power to close their school due to health and safety concerns and waive make-up days.

Unusually high rates of student absenteeism (approximately 30-40%) due to influenza-like illness have led to a variety of temporary school closures in some districts around the state. The CDC and DHS continue to stress that school closure should be used as a last resort due to disruption of learning and the social impact. However, if high rates of student or staff absenteeism make it difficult for schools to operate, a limited closure may be the best option to decrease exposure to influenza. In most cases, the decision to close schools is a joint decision made by local health departments and school administrators in consultation with DHS.

School closure information is listed on the DPI website at <http://dpi.wi.gov/sspw/pandemicflu.html> or can be found in the Media Room at pandemic.wisconsin.gov.

Parents are reminded that keeping sick children home from school until 24 hours after they are free of fever (100°F [37.8°C] or greater) without the aid of medication is the safest way to prevent the spread of any illness. DHS is also encouraging parents to have a pre-designated plan for caring for a sick child at home for the duration of a school exclusion period. Wisconsin businesses are also encouraged to adopt similar plans with their employees.

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