



State of Wisconsin  
Department of Health Services

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Jim Doyle, Governor  
Karen E. Timberlake, Secretary

## H1N1 Situation Report

*October 28, 2009 at 12:00 Hours*

### Overview

Nationally, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) reports that flu activity is now widespread in 46 states. Visits to doctors for influenza-like-illness are increasing steeply and are now higher than what is seen at the peak of many regular flu seasons. In addition, flu-related hospitalizations and deaths continue to go up nation-wide and are above what is expected for this time of year. In Wisconsin, activity is widespread with H1N1 cases being reported in 65 of the 72 counties.

On October 27<sup>th</sup>, DHS issued guidance to local health departments and health professionals asking them to target H1N1 vaccine for a subset of individuals most-at-risk during the next several weeks as the vaccine supply continues to fluctuate (detailed list provided below in the H1N1 Vaccine section). DHS has also requested that, beginning next week, public and private health care providers refrain from mass public vaccination clinics, unless they are targeted at those most at risk.

H1N1 vaccine is being provided for free from the federal government, and DHS strongly advises that anyone within the target group who presents to a provider for an H1N1 vaccine be immunized on-site, rather than being referred elsewhere. In addition, DHS has directed local health departments to vaccinate anyone within the newly-designated target group, regardless of that individual's city or county of residence. Local health departments are receiving federal funding for administering the vaccine and should not turn away anyone in the target group.

The CDC continues to stress there will be adequate supplies of H1N1 vaccine available for everyone who wants it, but it will take a longer time than previously projected for adequate supplies to become available.

A variety of schools districts 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

Influenza activity is widespread across the state and continues to increase in all five public health regions. Influenza-like activity is higher than normal for this time of year, with 65 of the 72 counties reporting confirmed H1N1 cases.

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.

Since September 1, 2009, there have been 70 hospitalizations due to H1N1 virus infection in Wisconsin. Since the October 21<sup>st</sup> situation report, three more counties have reported H1N1-related deaths, bringing the statewide death total to 14 since the spring. The new H1N1-related deaths include one death in Eau Claire County, two in Milwaukee County and one in Oconto County.

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## **H1N1 Vaccine Update**

On October 27<sup>th</sup>, DHS issued guidance to local health departments and health professionals asking they target H1N1 vaccine to a subset of those individuals most-at-risk during the next several weeks as the vaccine supply continues to fluctuate.

DHS is now recommending that the public health and health care community focus vaccination efforts on the following subset of CDC's target groups:

- Pregnant women
- Persons who live with or provide care for infants age 6 months or younger (examples: parents, siblings, daycare providers)
- Health care and emergency medical services personnel who have direct contact with patients or infectious material
- Children age 6 months - 4 years
- Children and adolescents age 5-18 years who have chronic medical conditions that put them at higher risk for influenza-related complications

These recommendations are consistent with the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices guidelines when vaccine supply is limited. The Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices advises the CDC.

DHS has also requested that, beginning next week, public and private health care providers refrain from H1N1 mass public vaccination clinics, unless they are targeted at those most-at-risk. DHS strongly encourages that any public vaccination announcements include a message about the limited supply of vaccine, the importance of concentrating on vaccinating people in the target groups and a notice that there is a possibility that the vaccination clinic – or future clinics – may need to be postponed.

Public health agencies and health care providers must be cautious and only commit to conducting vaccination clinics that they feel reasonably certain can be supplied with H1N1 influenza vaccine. Community vaccination clinics will resume as H1N1 vaccine becomes more readily available. The CDC continues to stress there will be adequate supplies of H1N1 vaccine available for everyone who wants it, but it will take a longer time than previously projected for adequate supplies to become available. The ordering of the H1N1 vaccine is a continuous process as newly manufactured vaccine approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) is allocated to the states and distributed each week.

As of October 27<sup>th</sup>, Wisconsin had been allocated a total of 407,000 doses of H1N1 vaccine from the CDC. The CDC indicates there is a lag time between allocation, ordering, and shipment of doses. Approximately 300,000 of Wisconsin's allocated doses have already arrived in the state in both the nasal and injectable forms, most of which have already been administered to the health care workforce and individuals within target groups.

## **DHS Activities**

DHS continues to staff a call center for health professionals pertaining to vaccine ordering questions and information. The call center is receiving approximately 70-100 calls each day. DHS also continues to host weekly webcasts for health professionals statewide and issue updated guidance as needed.

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## **DHS Activities Continued**

In conjunction with 2-1-1 Wisconsin, DHS launched the flu clinic finder which is available online at <http://pandemic.wisconsin.gov> or [www.wisconsinfluclinic.info](http://www.wisconsinfluclinic.info). Health care providers and other organizations across Wisconsin are calling 2-1-1 and providing detailed information on the type of flu shot that is available (seasonal or H1N1), date, time and locations of vaccination clinics. Community vaccination clinics will resume as H1N1 vaccine becomes more readily available. People may also call 2-1-1 to find out an H1N1 or seasonal influenza vaccine clinic nearest them.

The ABC News Medical Unit has named Wisconsin one of the best states for keeping their public informed about where the limited supply of H1N1 vaccine can be found. The ABC News story indicated that a state-by-state comparison of flu websites revealed that Wisconsin, New Jersey and Kansas are helping the vaccine process run a little smoother by providing vaccine locating tools, lists of local doctors who will provide the vaccine, and even phone numbers for hotlines devoted to helping the public locate a H1N1 vaccine clinic or doctor nearby.

## **Partner Items**

Calls to 2-1-1 Wisconsin have increased dramatically. The majority of the calls relate to H1N1 vaccine availability, with other calls pertaining to issues such as flu symptoms, prevention of the illness, and seasonal flu vaccine availability.

## **School Closures**

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 <http://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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