



October 27, 2009

## **VACCINATION FOR PRIORITY GROUPS – INFORMATION ALERT**

The Pennsylvania Department of Public Welfare (the “Department”), in cooperation with the Pennsylvania Department of Health (the “PA DOH”), is working to provide important information to the Department’s licensed facilities and providers regarding the access of the H1N1 or swine flu vaccine for their clients and consumers that are in a Priority Group and most vulnerable to complications from the H1N1 virus.

Access to the H1N1 vaccine is very important, especially for individuals that are in one or more of the Priority Groups as defined below by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Individuals in the following Priority Groups are considered most vulnerable to complications from the H1N1 virus and should consider getting the vaccination for H1N1 flu when it first becomes available:

- Pregnant women
- Persons six months to 24 years old
- Healthcare providers and EMS personnel
- Parents, household members or caregivers of children under 6 months of age
- Those under 65 years of age with certain underlying medical conditions

### **How should your clients and consumers in one or more of these Priority Groups obtain the vaccine?**

The Department recommends that you work with your clients and consumers in these Priority Groups to coordinate their receipt of the H1N1 vaccine with their primary care physicians (PCPs). Having your clients work with their PCPs is the preferred choice because your clients’ PCPs will be familiar with their medical histories and may be able to administer the vaccine.

### **What if your clients and consumers in the Priority Groups cannot access the vaccine from their PCPs?**

In situations where access to the vaccine through their PCPs is not an option, your clients have some alternative ways to receive the vaccine. PA DOH is currently planning for PA DOH-sponsored public mass vaccination clinics throughout the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania in order to provide access to the H1N1 vaccine. The H1N1 vaccine is free and there *will not be* an administration charge for receiving the vaccine at the PA DOH-sponsored public mass vaccination clinics. This is very important for your clients that receive Medical Assistance since some of the non-PA DOH-sponsored public mass vaccination clinics may charge an administration fee for the vaccination.

Other alternative ways they may receive the vaccine include: private and public vaccination clinics, provider offices, retail settings, pharmacies, workplaces, and community vaccinators.

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### **Where will the PA DOH-sponsored public mass vaccination clinics be located?**

PA DOH is currently planning the location of the PA DOH-sponsored public mass vaccination clinics. They will publish the locations of the PA DOH-sponsored public mass vaccination clinics on their website once the locations have been finalized. You will be able to call 1-877-PA-HEALTH to obtain information about the PA DOH-sponsored public mass vaccination clinics closest to your facility once they have been finalized. In the upcoming weeks, the Department will issue another information alert to the facilities that will alert you to the availability of the information on the locations of the PA DOH-sponsored vaccination clinics.

### **Where can I find additional information on the H1N1 virus and vaccine?**

To find an H1N1 vaccination site, people in the recommended priority groups should contact their PCP. If their PCP does not plan to administer the vaccine or if an individual does not have a PCP, please call 1-877-PA-HEALTH or visit [www.H1N1inPA.com](http://www.H1N1inPA.com) to learn how they can obtain the vaccine.

Please visit the following websites for additional information:

- [www.h1n1inpa.com](http://www.h1n1inpa.com): The Pennsylvania Department of Health's website dedicated to the H1N1 virus.
- [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov): Select the H1N1 tab for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's website.
- [www.dpw.state.pa.us](http://www.dpw.state.pa.us): The Pennsylvania Department of Public Welfare's website.

### **Is your facility located in the City of Philadelphia?**

If your facility is located within the City of Philadelphia, please visit the City of Philadelphia Department of Health's website at [www.phila.gov/health/](http://www.phila.gov/health/) and click on the H1N1 Information for the Public logo on the right side of the page. This website will provide information regarding the mass vaccination clinics in the City. You may also call 215-685-6458 if you have any related questions regarding the H1N1 vaccine.

The Department asks that you share this information with your clients and consumers to assist them with coordinating their access to the vaccine. The Department thanks you for all of your hard work and dedication to Pennsylvania's residents.

Please note that auxiliary aids and services are available upon request to individuals with disabilities.