FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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H1N1 Vaccine Arrives in Johnson County

Who should receive it?

For months, two primary questions about H1N1 influenza have been circulating. When will the H1N1 vaccine arrive and who should get it? The first question has been answered the first shipment of the H1N1 vaccine arrived in Johnson County today.

“Vaccine allocation to Johnson County is determined by the state according to population,” said Doug Beardsley, Director of Johnson County Public Health. “As a local public health agency, we collaborate with providers to administer the vaccine.” Johnson County Public Health received 500 doses of FluMist, the nasal spray form of the vaccine which is a live attenuated virus. Additional shipments of the vaccine will continue to arrive in the following weeks.

As for who should receive the vaccine, Johnson County is following IDPH guidelines, which state the H1N1 vaccine should first be made available to the following priority groups:

- pregnant women,
- people who live with or care for children younger than 6 months of age,
- health care and emergency medical services personnel with direct patient contact,
- children 6 months through 4 years of age, and
- children 5 through 18 years of age who have chronic medical conditions.

Because of the limited amount of vaccine and the further restrictions on who can receive the nasal spray, the first shipment will be used for health care workers providing direct care to patients and emergency services personnel who are often the first to make contact with an ill person in distress.

The seasonal flu vaccine and the H1N1 vaccine can be given at the same time and at any time in any sequence with one exception: if using the live nasal spray vaccine for both the seasonal flu and H1N1, they should be given 4 weeks apart to ensure the best protection from both vaccines.

In addition, it remains important to take personal actions to prevent the spread of the virus:

- Cover your cough,
- Clean your hands, and
• Contain germs by staying home when ill.

Johnson County Public Health anticipates receiving more vaccine each week. “The CDC indicates that substantial quantities of vaccine should be available by the end of the month.” Said Beardsley. “We’re asking for the public’s cooperation and patience to ensure we get the most vulnerable persons vaccinated first. Large public vaccination sites will be announced when vaccine supplies are sufficient. Our goal is to provide everyone who wants a vaccine the opportunity to get one.”

A statewide toll-free hotline has been established for public questions about seasonal and H1N1 influenza at 1-800-447-1985. More information can also be found at www.johnson-county.com or www.idph.state.ia.us.

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