



## **H1N1 Flu and You**

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### **Update on the 2009 H1N1 vaccine that is coming to Kansas**

*by Dr. Jason Eberhart-Phillips, State Health Officer and Director, KDHE Division of Health*



**T**oday, Kansas is another step closer to having the 2009 H1N1 influenza vaccine available. On September 30, KDHE held a news conference to discuss the H1N1 vaccine and I wanted to provide the same information to you.

Starting on Wednesday, September 30, states were able to place their first orders for the 2009 H1N1 vaccine. The vaccine will be allocated based on population, with Kansas receiving

about 16,000 doses in this first allocation.

The first shipments of the vaccine should arrive in the state during the first week of October. The first doses that will be available will be the H1N1 Live Attenuated Influenza Vaccine (LAIV), a nasal-spray flu vaccine, which can be given to healthy individuals 2-49 years of age.

We are pleased to be one step closer to receiving this new safe and effective vaccine in the state. However, Kansans should understand that initially we will only receive a very small amount and it will be several months before there will be enough to provide to everyone in the state wanting to protect themselves from this new virus.

The Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) has recommended that certain groups receive the H1N1 vaccine when it first becomes available because they have the highest risk of severe illness. These target groups include:

- Pregnant women
- People who live with or care for children younger than 6 months of age
- Healthcare and emergency medical services personnel
- Persons 6 months through 24 years of age
- People ages of 25 through 64 years of age who are at higher risk for 2009 H1N1 because of chronic health disorders or compromised immune systems.

Because early supplies will be very limited, KDHE has recommended to local health departments that they provide the initial vaccine doses to health care workers with direct patient contact and healthy children two through nine years of age. The first vaccine doses we receive will be the LAIV, which will be most appropriate for the health care workers who have no underlying health conditions, and allows for the early administration to healthy two through nine year old children,

who will require a second dose.

Each week the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) will determine how much vaccine each state will receive based on population. KDHE will allocate Kansas' share among the counties. Initial county allocations are based on 2008 population census data of 0-24 year olds. This age-adjusted data is used to better assure that the vaccine is allocated in a way that reflects the primary target populations of children and young adults. Once the vaccine demand has been met for the five target groups, allocations will be calculated on the total population.

After KDHE allocates the vaccine to each county, the local health department will make the decision on how the vaccine is administered locally. Local health departments may choose to partner with public and private providers in their county (such as hospitals, doctor's offices or retail pharmacies) to help administer the H1N1 vaccine.

We at KDHE take the safety of our citizens and employees very seriously and have closely followed the development and testing of the H1N1 vaccine. The H1N1 vaccines are being made using the same processes used for making the seasonal flu vaccines, which have a long record of producing safe seasonal influenza vaccines. The CDC and FDA closely monitor the safety of all vaccines licensed for use in the United States, including seasonal influenza vaccines, in cooperation with state and local health departments, healthcare providers and others.

Though H1N1 influenza is a serious disease, it's important not to forget the risks posed by seasonal influenza virus. Individuals, especially those at high risk for serious complications and their close contacts, are encouraged to get their seasonal flu vaccines now or as soon as vaccine is available in their communities. Seasonal influenza is expected to circulate this fall and winter along with H1N1.

I encourage all state employees to stay informed and visit [http://www.kdheks.gov/H1N1/H1N1\\_Vaccine.htm](http://www.kdheks.gov/H1N1/H1N1_Vaccine.htm) to get more information on flu vaccines.

Yours sincerely,

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