



COLLIN COUNTY

Collin County Health Care Services
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H1N1 INFLUENZA ALERT TO HEALTH CARE PROVIDERS

DATE: August 12, 2009
RE: Novel H1N1 Influenza Vaccine & Updates from the August 10, 2009 Texas Department of State Health Services (DSHS) Flu Summit

A few months ago, the Novel H1N1 virus was detected in our community. The virus has continued to be detected throughout the summer months and we can anticipate it continuing to spread as our seasonal flu months approach. So far, the disease has been mild and no deaths have occurred in Collin County.

Please note the following updates from DSHS and the Centers for Disease Control (CDC):

- **Diagnosis:** See the CDC's guidance on which patients should be tested by visiting their website at www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/clinicians and clicking on the "Specimen Collection, Processing, and Testing for Suspected Infection" link. If H1N1 testing is recommended, contact your clinical reference lab for H1N1 testing.
- **Treatment:** Please refer to the latest CDC guidance for H1N1 treatment for specific age groups and patients with specific medical needs by visiting their website at www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/clinicians. Also, you may visit the DSHS website at www.TexasFlu.org and click on the "Healthcare Professionals" link on the left side of the webpage for updated resources.
- **Seasonal Influenza Vaccine:** CDC and DSHS advise that all health care providers should give the seasonal influenza vaccine to patients as soon as it is available.
- **Novel H1N1 Vaccine Availability:** The Novel H1N1 vaccine is expected to be available mid-October. At this time, we can anticipate providers giving 2 doses of the vaccine, 3-4 weeks apart. Please note that we are expecting further clarification as information from the trial studies is released.
- **Prioritization for Novel H1N1 Vaccine:** Please go to www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/vaccination/acip.htm and review the CDC's instructions on who can receive the vaccine in order to determine how many doses you will need for your patient population.
- **Novel H1N1 Vaccine Ordering:** Providers will be able to order Novel H1N1 vaccine directly from the DSHS website to be directly shipped to your location. Providers must go online to www.TexasFlu.org and go to the "Health Care Professionals" subheading in order to register and get information on obtaining the vaccine. DSHS is currently working on the electronic registration and ordering process, so please check the web page daily for updates.
- **Novel H1N1 Preparation Checklist:** Attached is a checklist for Health Care Providers distributed by DSHS to help synchronize our efforts in the coming weeks and months

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Health Care Providers Novel H1N1 Preparation Checklist

- Ensure that health care workers are vaccinated against both the seasonal flu and novel H1N1 flu (when vaccine becomes available).
- Consider participating in our influenza like illness sentinel surveillance program. Contact your local health department or the state health department for more information.
- Identify clinical reference labs for diagnostic testing in your area.
- Finalize seasonal flu vaccine plans and plans for novel H1N1 vaccine process within your practice setting.
- Identify local health department officials and familiarize yourself with any local plans and reporting requirements and coordinate efforts.
- Educate patients about infection control measures and about how to care for someone with flu at home.
- Make infection control materials (tissues, hand sanitizer, soap, and water) readily available in your office and create plans to manage patients with influenza like illness in your practice settings, including your waiting rooms.
- Educate your patients about using the health care system during flu season when the community is experiencing an increase in demand for services and offices and hospitals are crowded or full. Ask patients to call before going to the doctor and inform them of how to take care of themselves and family members at home.
- Develop specialized advice for patients at higher risk of complications from flu due to underlying conditions. Assure these patients receive their seasonal flu vaccine and novel H1N1 vaccine when available. Provide vaccination for pneumococcal disease as recommended.
- Develop plans to manage an increase in demand for health care services (medical surge) when experiencing reduced staffing.
- Evaluate your capacity to manage an increase in pediatric, OB, and critical care patients.
- Get updated information: www.TexasFlu.org