



New Hampshire Department of Health and Human Services
October 30, 2009

Frequently Asked Questions About H1N1 Vaccine Distribution

The following information is about the allocation and distribution process for H1N1 vaccine in New Hampshire.

Where does the H1N1 vaccine come from?

The federal government (U.S. Food and Drug Administration [FDA]) has contracted with four manufacturers who produce vaccine: CSL (Australia), Sanofi Pasteur (France), Novartis (Switzerland), and MedImmune (Maryland). These are some of the same manufacturers who produce the seasonal flu vaccine every year.

Who pays for the vaccine?

The H1N1 vaccine is being purchased by the U.S. Government who is allocating it to all the States and Territories of the United States at no charge.

How does the vaccine get to New Hampshire?

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) contracted with a national distributor to receive the H1N1 vaccine from the manufacturers and ship the vaccine to the states as it becomes available. The vaccine doses received from the manufacturers are divided up among the states based on their population. All the states distribute their portion of vaccine on a weekly basis to medical providers, hospitals, and clinics as it becomes available.

Are there different types of vaccines in the shipments?

Yes, although they are all H1N1 vaccines, they come in several different forms: a nasal spray form, a multi-dose vial for giving multiple shots, and single-dose syringes. All of these forms are not coming each week. Sometimes the states get all of one kind or a few of one and more of the others. It depends on what is available.

What is the difference among the types of vaccine?

- The nasal spray form is appropriate for healthy people aged 2 to 49 who are not pregnant.
- The multi-dose vials contain a preservative to prevent contamination and are available for children and adults.
- The single-dose vaccines are preservative-free and are generally reserved for children 6 months through 35 months and for children whose parents prefer the preservative-free vaccine.

Who is giving out the vaccine?

The New Hampshire Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) has the responsibility of distributing the H1N1 vaccine. The staff places an order every week with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) based on the requests it receives from the 400+ medical

providers in the State who have volunteered to administer the vaccine. Large shipments arrive in New Hampshire via private carriers for providers who order them directly. Small orders are shipped into the State and are repackaged and sent out to providers who have fewer patients.

What if a physician orders some doses but there isn't enough that week?

All of the providers participating in this vaccine distribution program send in an order based on the doses they expect to use the following week. Based on their orders, how much the New Hampshire Immunization Program (NHIP) has available, what type of doses they have, and the population percentages throughout the State NHIP divides up what they have received that week. The vaccine is distributed to and dispensed by the medical providers. The medical provider's office makes a new order the next week. This will continue until the program ends.

Is DHHS keeping track of how many doses come in and go out?

Yes. The NH Immunization Program is working hard to fill orders and is collecting the data of doses allocated, doses received, doses ordered, doses shipped, where they went, how many were given out, and how many people in the risk groups (pregnant women, young children, etc.) are receiving the vaccine.

Will there be other ways to get the vaccine later besides through a doctor's office?

Yes. DHHS anticipates that communities will be operating public clinics later in the season when more vaccine becomes available and after some of the high-risk groups have been given the vaccine.

What are the high-risk groups?

Certain groups of people are at increased risk of developing serious complications or of dying from H1N1 influenza. Therefore, the CDC is encouraging them to receive the H1N1 vaccine as early as possible. These groups include: pregnant women, household contacts and caregivers of children younger than 6 months*, health care workers and emergency response personnel with direct patient contact, people between the age of 6 months and 24 years, and adults 25-64 with medical conditions that are complicated by the influenza virus. (*The vaccine has not been approved for use in children this young, so it is important that their caregivers receive the vaccine to avoid infecting them.)

Will there be prioritization of these groups?

Yes, even among these groups at higher risk. In the beginning of the vaccine distribution process there won't be enough for everyone all at once. The groups at most risk of serious complications or death are encouraged to get the vaccine first, including pregnant women, children 6 months to 5 years of age with chronic medical conditions, and health care workers and first responders with direct patient contact. These people will be followed by children 5 to 18 years of age with medical conditions that are complicated by flu, household contacts of children younger than 6 months of age especially siblings, young adults 19 to 24 years of age with medical conditions, all healthy children and young adults age 6 months to 18 years of age, adults 25 to 64 years of age with conditions that are complicated by the flu, and all healthcare workers and first responders. After that the general public will be encouraged to get the vaccine.

How do I get a vaccine if I am in a priority group?

In the first phase of the distribution process the H1N1 vaccine is only being distributed to registered medical providers. Call your healthcare provider's office and ask if they are a participating provider. If they are they can help you. If they are not, ask them if they know of a physician who is and contact them.

Will everyone be able to get a vaccine who wants one?

Eventually anyone who wants an H1N1 vaccine will get one.

What if I don't want to get a vaccine?

The H1N1 vaccine project is voluntary.

How will the general public receive the vaccine?

Participating physicians offices will continue to offer vaccine, but as the fall progresses, local communities will be offering clinics through 'points of dispensing' or PODs that will be open to the general public. Additionally, retail pharmacies and large employers, if they choose, will be allocated H1N1 vaccine for dispensing.

How will I find out about these clinics?

Information about these clinics will be widely distributed through the media once they are scheduled. Listen to the news and visit any of several websites – www.dhhs.nh.gov, www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu, or www.flu.gov. The statewide information and referral line 2-1-1 will list the availability of H1N1 vaccine clinics. Also, your local community will be advertising any clinics that will be happening in your area.