



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
October 1, 2009

Health District expects to receive first doses of inhaled H1N1 vaccine
Initial doses ordered by Nevada State Health Division

LAS VEGAS – The Nevada State Health Division announced that it has ordered approximately 28,000 doses of the 2009 H1N1 Influenza vaccine. The Southern Nevada Health District has been advised by the Nevada State Health Division that it will receive approximately 20,000 doses; however, a delivery date is yet to be confirmed. The initial delivery will consist of the inhaled vaccine, which is approved for limited members of the H1N1 vaccine priority groups. For information about 2009 H1N1 influenza, vaccine updates and clinics, visit www.SouthernNevadaHealthDistrict.org.

Due to the limited number of doses expected, the health district will first offer the inhaled version of the vaccine to health care workers and EMTs who meet the approved guidelines to receive the inhaled vaccine. These are members of the initial priority groups designated by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to receive H1N1 vaccine first. The inhaled vaccine is approved for healthy people between the ages of 2 and 49. It is not approved for pregnant women or children and adults who have underlying medical conditions, such as asthma or diabetes.

“We are working closely with our emergency medical response agencies and the hospitals to identify staff who are eligible to receive the inhaled vaccine. EMTs and health care workers who have direct patient contact can be a first line of defense against the spread of any influenza strain because they may have close contact with people who are at risk of complications from influenza,” said Dr. Lawrence Sands, the health district’s chief health officer. “It is also important to protect EMTs and health care workers because increased absenteeism among this group could affect our local health care system and its ability to care for people who are ill.”

According to the CDC, additional doses of the vaccine will be shipped to state health divisions, local health authorities, and health care providers on a weekly basis. It is expected that although there will be limited doses available initially, the supply is expected to grow over the coming months and will eventually be enough to accommodate everyone who wants to receive the vaccine.

“It is important to note that not all health care providers will receive the vaccine when it first becomes available. Physicians and medical practices that treat members of the priority groups will be among the first to receive the vaccine. It could take a month or more for the vaccine supply to become sufficient to meet the needs of our community and be readily available through a majority of providers in Southern Nevada,” said Sands. “Until we have an adequate supply of vaccine in our community, we are asking for the public’s patience as we get the vaccine out to the people who are among the priority groups identified by the CDC’s Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices.”

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Health District H1N1 vaccine – add one

The 2009 H1N1 Influenza vaccine priority groups include:

- **Pregnant women** because there is a higher risk of complications and immunization can potentially provide protection to infants who cannot be vaccinated;
- **Household contacts and caregivers for children younger than 6 months of age** because younger infants are at higher risk of influenza-related complications and cannot be vaccinated. Vaccination of those in close contact with infants less than 6 months old might help protect infants by “cocooning” them from the virus;
- **Healthcare and emergency medical services personnel** because infections among healthcare workers have been reported and this can be a potential source of infection for vulnerable patients. Also, increased absenteeism in this population could reduce health care system capacity;
- **People between the ages of six months and 24 years old** because children from 6 months through 18 years of age are in close contact with each other in school and day care settings, which increases the likelihood of disease spread, and young adults 19 through 24 years of age because they often live, work, and study in close proximity; and
- **People between the ages of 25 and 64 years who have health conditions** associated with higher risk of medical complications from influenza.

The 2009 H1N1 Influenza vaccine will require one dose for people over the age of 10. Children under the age of nine will need two doses of the vaccine to be adequately protected. The initial dose should be followed by the booster approximately 21 – 28 days later.

“The best protection against influenza is prevention,” said Sands. “We want to remind Southern Nevadans to get their regular seasonal flu shots, and practice good health habits such as frequent hand washing, remaining home when you are sick, and coughing into your elbow or a tissue and immediately throwing it away.” Seasonal flu shots are available at the health district’s public health centers as well as pharmacies, clinics and provider offices throughout the Valley.