

H1N1 Action:

Residential Workers: High Priority for H1N1 Vaccination

A limited initial supply of H1N1 vaccine should start being available in Oregon shortly. Initially, the vaccine will be targeted for certain priority groups. Because of the increased risk of exposure and the need to have workers available to provide vital services, health care workers are in the initial priority group. Please note that unlike most years, clients (even those with chronic conditions) who are age 65 or older are **not** in the priority population for H1N1 flu vaccination.

Paid Workers in the DD 24 Hour Residential for children and adults, Supported Living services and children's proctor care services are considered "health care workers" and have priority access to the H1N1 vaccination if the following is true:

- Work directly with clients in the home setting.

Workers who do the following are not considered health care workers:

- Provide vocational, employment, or alternatives to employment services,
- Provide consultative or training services that don't involve hands-on contact with people receiving services
- Perform administrative services and are not regularly involved in hands-on contact with people receiving services.

Family members who are not paid to provide service unfortunately at this point do not fall into the definition of Health Care Worker.

This alert gives instructions about getting the workers who are in the priority group vaccinated. However, most people with developmental disabilities (who are less than 65 years old) are also in the high priority group and can be immunized using these instructions.

If the agency has nurses available who could administer the vaccine, it is recommended that the agency set up their own "flu clinic."

This will involve

- contacting your local Public Health Department (attached is a list of local PH contacts),
- telling them the number of workers and/or people receiving services expected to consent to vaccination,

- registering the nurse as a vaccine distributor,
- setting up and understanding the refrigeration needs of the vaccine, and then
- picking up the vaccine. It will come with the syringes and other supplies needed to administer the vaccine.
- If your refrigeration system is not certified for vaccines, unused vaccine must be returned to the local health department at the end of the day.
- Attached is the necessary doctor's "standing order" signed by the SPD Medical Director, Tina Kitchin, MD.

If the vaccine is not used as agreed upon with the local public health department, the vaccine must be returned to them.

If the agency does not have nurses available, please direct your staff to either their personal physician (some have agreed to administer the vaccine to their patients) or to public flu clinics sponsored by the local health department. Once they know when they will have the H1N1 vaccine, health departments will use public media (TV, radio, newspaper) and potentially their website to advertise the sites of the flu clinics. Workers should be warned that there may be an administration fee (usually \$15 or less) but no one will be turned away because of inability to pay. Medicare and/or Medicaid will pay the administration fee for those eligible for those programs who obtain their vaccination at the physician's office.

If workers are sent to public flu clinics, it may be helpful to print this letter have them take it with them as proof that they are "health care workers."