

H1N1 Action: Better Access to Vaccination

The supply of H1N1 vaccine has begun to better meet the need for the priority groups. Although the incidence of the flu appears to be decreasing in many communities, it remains a real threat and may resurge again later this winter. Everyone should get the vaccine as soon as it is available.

In this pandemic, individuals with developmental disabilities have been significantly impacted. Four out of the 6 deaths in children from 4/1 to 11/19 had a developmental disability. Adults were also hospitalized and have died.

The limited supply of vaccine has been frustrating to everyone and availability has varied from community to community. In recent discussion with local Public Health officials, it appears that many Health Departments now have enough vaccine to assist agencies to vaccinate all health care workers who work at the facility (all those staff who provide hands-on assistance with clients) and clients who are in the priority population (all those with developmental disabilities who are less than 65 years old).

If the staff in your agency and your clients in the priority group **have not** yet been vaccinated, contact your local health department now. Local Health Departments have different levels of resources and vaccine available and the decision about how to distribute the vaccine is a local decision. Your patience with this complicated process of immunizing millions of Oregonians is greatly appreciated.

If the agency has nurses available who could administer the vaccine, it is recommended that the agency set up their own “flu clinic.” If it is possible, it would be greatly appreciated if those agencies with nurses were willing to assist those agencies without nurses and even those individuals who may be served in the family support program or through your local brokerages. This will involve

- contacting your local Public Health Department (attached is an updated list of local PH contacts),
- telling them the number of workers and clients in the priority group expected to consent to vaccination,
- discussing with your local Public Health Department the steps necessary to vaccinate both your workers and clients in the priority group (mainly adults less than 65 years with chronic conditions).

- Attached is a copy of the original “standing order” order for the vaccine and a “standing order” for a severe reaction to the vaccine. The nurse can use these doctor’s orders to dispense the vaccine.

If the agency does not have nurses available, discuss how best to vaccinate your staff and clients with the local Public Health Department. The individual private physicians for your staff and your clients may have the vaccine and be able to vaccinate their patients. Your local pharmacy may also be a resource. There may be an administration fee.

Again, thank you everyone who has worked very hard to protect the health of those we serve and the staff who so very important to those in services.

Attachment:

Updated PH contact list

Vaccine standing order

Adverse Reaction standing order