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Authorized Signature

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Topic: Provider Information

Subject: Flu Update

Applies to (check all that apply):
- [ ] All DHS employees
- [x] Area Agencies on Aging
- [ ] Children, Adults and Families
- [x] County DD Program Managers
- [x] County Mental Health Directors
- [ ] Health Services
- [x] Seniors and People with Disabilities
- [x] Other (please specify): Public Health Directors, CDDP Directors

Message: Over the next three months, SPD Central Office will be distributing a series Flu Updates to DD 24 Hour Residential Programs, DD Adult Foster Care, DD Children Foster Care, DD Brokerage Directors, Supported Living, Proctor Providers and SPD Foster Care (Commercial/Relative). This information will be shared to those with e-mail. If others wish it, please feel free to distribute. Similar information will also be distributed to nursing facilities and Assisted Living/Residential Care facilities through the Administrator Alert system.

Attached is the first of the series. If you have questions, please contact me.

If you have any questions about this information, contact:

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Flu Update #1

H1N1 flu virus has not been in the news as much as last spring. However, surprisingly the virus has continued to spread in Oregon and has caused hospitalizations of people with that virus. Attached is a recent fact sheet from the Public Health Division of DHS. Also attached is a poster that can be printed and posted where you wish. Feel free to share.

It is anticipated that the fall and winter will be a very active flu season. It is important that facilities start planning now for the likely increased activity. In order to assist you to be as prepared as possible, SPD will be sending you a short series of tips and updates.

Flu Vaccines
There will likely be two different vaccines offered this fall: the seasonal flu vaccine and a new H1N1 vaccine.

- **Seasonal flu vaccine.** This vaccine will target the anticipated strains of flu that usually circulate. Distribution will likely be through the usual manner (local doctor offices, flu clinics in stores, etc.) but may be available early. Because absenteeism could be very high with the H1N1 virus, it is especially important that staff are encouraged to get their seasonal flu shots. People should be especially diligent this year in obtaining vaccinations for the people served by your agency. If seasonal flu vaccine is available early, it would be good to immunize early. It will protect the person throughout the entire year for the seasonal flu.

- **Novel H1N1 vaccine.** This vaccine will only target the H1N1 virus. The priority populations for this new vaccine and the distribution system are being planned now. Because this virus appears to infect children and young adults at such high rates, it is likely that the priority population for vaccine will be different than usual. It will also likely be distributed in a different manner. Your local Public Health Department will play a key role this fall and will have the most up-to-date information. Now is the time to make those contacts if you haven’t already.

**Recommendations:**

1. Make sure that all people served are offered a seasonal flu shot as soon as available.
2. If you don’t already, consider your policies and procedures to help ensure that as many as possible staff get their seasonal flu shot.

3. Make contact now with your local Health Department. Know how they plan to communicate information about flu and vaccines to your community.

4. Stay in contact this fall with your local Health Department.
Introduction
• Pandemic H1N1 (originally referred to as “swine” flu) is a respiratory disease caused by type A influenza virus.
• Human cases of pandemic H1N1 influenza started showing up in the U.S. in late March 2009, and quickly spread throughout the country and the world. In June 2009, the World Health Organization declared a pandemic of the new virus.

Risks
• Infections with pandemic H1N1 flu can be mild to severe. Most cases in the U.S. have been similar to seasonal flu.
• Certain groups are at increased risk of complications from influenza, whether they have infection from the newly identified flu strain, or seasonal flu varieties. These include children aged younger than five years, pregnant women, people older than 65 years and those with chronic health conditions, such as diabetes, heart disease, lung disease or compromised immunity.
• People in these groups who develop a high fever with cough, sore throat, or muscle aches, or parents of young children with these symptoms, should call their health care provider.
• Like other influenza illness, pandemic H1N1 flu spreads from person to person through coughing or sneezing of people who are sick.
• You cannot get pandemic H1N1 flu from eating pork or pork products. Eating properly handled and cooked pork products is safe.

Symptoms
• The symptoms of pandemic H1N1 are similar to the symptoms of regular flu and include fever, cough, sore throat, body aches, headache, chills and fatigue. Some people have also experienced diarrhea and vomiting.
• Like seasonal flu, pandemic H1N1 may cause a worsening of underlying chronic medical conditions. Most deaths have been in people with underlying medical conditions.
• Seek emergency medical care if you become ill and experience any of the following warning signs:
  o Difficulty breathing or shortness of breath
  o Pain or pressure in the chest or abdomen
  o Sudden dizziness
  o Confusion
  o Severe or persistent vomiting.
In children, emergency warning signs that need urgent medical attention include:
- Fast breathing or trouble breathing
- Bluish skin color
- Not drinking enough fluids
- Not waking up or not interacting
- Being so irritable that the child does not want to be held
- Flu-like symptoms improve, but then return with fever and worse cough
- Fever with a rash.

**Treatment**

- Most people with pandemic H1N1 get better with normal supportive care.
- In some settings antiviral medication may be indicated to reduce symptoms or prevent the spread of disease. Currently, it is recommended only for hospitalized patients and persons who, based on their age or chronic health conditions, are at increased risk of complications.
- Antiviral drugs are prescription medicines that fight against the flu by keeping flu viruses from reproducing in the body.
- If treatment is started within two days of the onset of symptoms, antiviral drugs can help prevent serious flu complications, may make illness milder and help patients feel better faster.

**Prevention**

- Vaccine to protect against pandemic H1N1 is currently being developed, but is not yet available.
- Regular flu vaccines do not generally protect against pandemic H1N1 flu. However it is a good idea to get a flu shot or nasal mist vaccine to protect against the other types of influenza that circulate every year.
- There are everyday actions that can help prevent the spread of germs that cause respiratory illnesses like influenza. Take these everyday steps to protect your health:
  - Cover your nose and mouth with your sleeve or a tissue when you cough or sneeze. Throw the tissue in the trash after you use it.
  - Wash your hands often with soap and water, especially after you cough or sneeze. Alcohol-based hand cleaners are also effective.
  - Try to avoid close contact with sick people.
  - Always stay home from work or school when you’re sick, and limit contact with others to keep them from getting sick.
  - Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth.

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**Public Health Emergency Preparedness Program**

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July 21, 2009
• Get a flu shot
• Cover your cough
• Wash your hands
• Stay home when you're sick
• Get a flu shot