



State of Connecticut
Department of Developmental Services



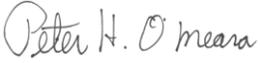
M. Jodi Rell
Governor

Peter H. O'Meara
Commissioner

Kathryn du Pree
Deputy Commissioner

Memorandum

TO: *Private Provider Executive Directors, DDS Executive Management Team and DDS Staff*

FROM: *Commissioner Peter H. O'Meara* 

DATE: *December 16, 2009*

We find ourselves in the middle of the 2009/2010 flu season. As you know, this flu season presents us with the threat of illness from two different types of influenza viruses: seasonal influenza and the novel H1N1 virus.

The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and the Connecticut Department of Public Health (DPH) recommend individuals get vaccinated for both types of influenza. Seasonal vaccines are currently available through an individual's healthcare provider. The Department of Developmental Services (DDS) has been informed by the DPH that the H1N1 virus vaccine, once in short supply, is becoming more available to registered healthcare providers.

H1N1 vaccines for DDS consumers may be obtained through their community based physicians/practitioners, and will be administered in the priority order established by the CDC. Public and private service providers should have already clarified with consumers' community based physicians/practitioners whether or not an individual is considered a member of one of the priority groups. The priority groups for vaccination are as follows:

- Pregnant women
- Household contacts and caregivers for children less than 6 months of age
- Healthcare and emergency medical services personnel
- All people from 6 months through 24 years of age
- Persons aged 25 through 64 years who have health conditions associated with higher risk of medical complications from influenza.
- **Health-care and emergency medical services personnel (NEW interpretation as of 12/10/09. See <http://www.ct.gov/ctfluwatch/cwp/view.asp?a=2533&q=450302> Current Vaccine Priority Populations)*
 - *Health-care personnel (HCP) include all paid and unpaid persons working in health-care settings who have the potential for exposure to patients with influenza, infectious materials, including body substances, contaminated medical supplies and equipment, or contaminated environmental surfaces. HCP might include (but are not limited to) physicians, nurses, nursing assistants, therapists, technicians, emergency medical service personnel, dental personnel, pharmacists, laboratory personnel, autopsy personnel, students and trainees, contractual staff not employed by the health-care facility, and persons (e.g., clerical, dietary, housekeeping, maintenance, and volunteers) not directly*

involved in patient care but potentially exposed to infectious agents that can be transmitted to and from HCP. The recommendations apply to HCP in acute-care hospitals, nursing homes, skilled nursing facilities, physicians' offices, urgent care centers, and outpatient clinics, and to persons who provide home health care and emergency medical services. Emergency medical services personnel might include persons in an occupation (e.g., emergency medical technicians and fire fighters) who provide emergency medical care as part of their normal job duties.

There have been circumstances in which DDS consumers in one of the priority vaccination groups identified by the CDC have been unable to obtain the H1N1 vaccine due to limited supply. To address such circumstances DDS and DPH recommends all public and private service providers maintain frequent contact with consumers' community based physicians/practitioners to check on the availability of the H1N1 vaccine. An individual's community based physician may register with the DPH to receive and dispense the H1N1 vaccine via the DPH website.

*DPH has included (as of 12/10/09) staff serving DDS consumers in the category of healthcare personnel and therefore a priority vaccination group. Staff should obtain their vaccinations as any member of the community would--through their community based physicians/practitioners or community based immunization programs.

Information on flu prevention, surveillance, and treatment is available on the CDC and DPH websites:

- www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu
- www.ct.gov/dph
- www.ct.gov/ctfluwatch

As is the current practice, all questions or concerns related to an individual's health care should be directed to their primary care physician/practitioner.

DDS appreciates your attention to this matter. Please continue to monitor the websites noted above for updated information.