



SAN MATEO COUNTY
HEALTH SYSTEM

PUBLIC HEALTH FAX ALERT

November 16, 2009

Message from the Health Officer on H1N1 Vaccine

**Please Share this Important Information with Physicians
in Your Practice and with Your Management Staff**

Several important things you should be aware of this week.

Off label use: There are a number of ways to use the vaccine you have received from different manufacturers. CSL product is now licensed for use in 6 months and older. Novartis is still licensed for use in 4 years and up. Use of vaccine in ways different from how it is licensed by the FDA is called off-label use. **Off-label use is legal and I strongly support off-label use for these vaccines.** In addition, supplies of preservative free vaccine remain extremely low, and the thimerosal exemption is still in effect. You can and should use multi-dose vaccine for pregnant women and for those under the age of 3. For children less than 3 years, the dose is .25 mL instead of 0.5 mL.

Doses received: San Mateo County vaccinators have now received about **77,000 doses** of H1N1 vaccine. From what I can tell, most of this has been administered to the appropriate priority groups. Please remember to report your data weekly on doses administered via the CalPanFlu website.

Prioritization: The CDC priority groups for H1N1 vaccine are still in effect here. It has come to my attention that not all of you are vaccinating priority groups first. You should not be giving vaccine to those falling outside these groups until we have received substantially more vaccine. You will be notified when vaccine is open for distribution to the general public.

Dose redistribution: If you have received vaccine that can not be used in your practice, please contact Natasha Desai, 650 573-2346, who can arrange to have the vaccine picked up and redistributed to another provider in need.

Re-ordering: Providers should **re-order after receiving a specific formulation.** The balance of your order does not remain in the system. You need to re-order to receive more vaccine. You can only re-order a formulation that you have already received.

Supplies: We have a limited supply of extra needle/syringe combinations available to support your vaccination efforts. If you need these, call Natasha to arrange for pick up of these supplies.

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Allowable charges/Fraud: Please remember this is publically funded vaccine and there are strict limits on charges to patients. If we find that these limits are not being followed, we will have to reclaim that provider's vaccine.

2nd Dose: It is recommended that children under the age of 10 receive 2 doses. We are still likely to face a vaccine shortage by the time this second dose is needed. In general, my recommendation to you is that everyone who wants a first dose should receive one before others receive a 2nd dose. Of course, based on the severity of a patient's underlying condition(s), you may want to prioritize a small portion of your patients getting the 2nd dose before the rest get their 1st dose.

3 Attachments: Attached are some FAQs that may be helpful to you. One is an explanation of how vaccine is being distributed here and why providers have shortages. Another is a communication to school staff about appropriate use of doctor's notes, and the third is guidance for employers. Please use these with your patients as you see fit.

Vaccine delivery status: Many of your patients may be asking about the status of vaccine delivery. We welcome you to refer your patients who have questions about vaccine availability to the **San Mateo County Flu Hotline (650) 573-3927** where they can receive up-to-date information on both seasonal and H1N1 vaccine and its availability. Please **do not** refer them to 573-2346, as that number is only for health-care providers.

As always, if you have questions about your supply that you can not get answered on www.calpanflu.org, please call (650) 573-2346 (please do not give this number to your patients) and ask for Natasha Desai. You are encouraged to visit our Healthcare Providers page on our website at www.smhealth.org/swineflu for tools and resources that may be of help and the CDC has posted "H1N1 Clinicians Questions/Answers" on recommendations for the vaccine at www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/vaccination/clinicians_qa.htm.

If you need assistance with this vaccination effort, please don't hesitate to contact me at (650) 573-2519.

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San Mateo County Health Officer