

DHHS Advises Residents to Prepare For Fall Flu Season

Communicable Disease Control & Surveillance

Published Date: 07/23/2009

Contact Information: Public Information Office
603-271-4051

Concord, NH – The Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) is encouraging residents of New Hampshire to continue taking steps to prevent H1N1 (swine) flu and to be better prepared in case the illness becomes more severe this fall. DHHS has been monitoring the outbreak of this novel strain and there are still cases occurring in communities around the State and nationwide.

“The State has been spending the last several years preparing for a possible pandemic,” said DHHS Commissioner Nicholas Toumpas, “and our Department especially, as the lead agency for this response, has been accelerating our efforts the past few months after the outbreak of H1N1 this spring. No one can predict for sure just how this virus might change over time but we want to be as prepared as possible to protect the health of New Hampshire’s citizens.”

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and other federal agencies are working in coordination with vaccine manufacturers to develop a vaccine for H1N1. It’s unclear when doses will be delivered to New Hampshire, how many, and how many shots people may need to receive. The vaccine is still in the development phase, and it is possible the federal government may even decide not to use it depending on what the virus does.

“We are working hard to be ready for whatever happens,” said Public Health Director Dr. José Montero, “but in the meantime we are planning to begin our seasonal flu vaccination campaign as soon as doses arrive in New Hampshire to ensure our citizens are protected from the seasonal strains of flu.”

New Hampshire residents are encouraged to get a seasonal flu vaccine; prepare a family emergency plan; cover their mouth with their sleeve when they cough or sneeze; and stay home from work, school, and other activities when they are sick.

The symptoms of H1N1 flu are similar to seasonal influenza, including fever, sore throat, cough, stuffy nose, chills, headache and muscle aches, and fatigue. Some patients have also reported diarrhea and vomiting and severe illness, including pneumonia and death, have been reported as well.

For more information on H1N1 flu, visit www.dhhs.nh.gov or the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) at www.cdc.gov/H1N1flu; for more information on seasonal flu vaccine go to www.dhhs.nh.gov/DHHS/IMMUNIZATION/default.htm; and for information on family preparedness visit www.ready.gov or for a brochure go to www.dhhs.nh.gov/DHHS/DPHS/LIBRARY/Brochure/7-makes-sense.htm.