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Stanislaus County H1N1 (Swine) Flu Vaccine Update

Stanislaus County - Stanislaus County received an initial 4,600 doses of nasal H1N1 Flu (swine flu) vaccine last week. This shipment from the federal government was directly delivered to medical providers in the County. More vaccines are expected to arrive to doctors' offices in the next few weeks.

"The initial quantities of the vaccine is limited, and the California Department of Public Health has directed that all of it be used to immunize children who are 2 years old to just under 10 years of age," said Dr. John Walker, Stanislaus County Health Officer. "The vaccine has been sent directly to medical providers who see this population."

The injectable vaccines (flu shot), including vaccines for pregnant women, are expected to arrive, in shipments, to Stanislaus County within the next couple of weeks to area medical providers. The California Department of Public Health is recommending the following groups be vaccinated, following the Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) guidelines on vaccination priority. These groups are at higher risk of contracting, spreading, or developing more complications from the H1N1 virus.

- Pregnant women
- Health care workers
- People living with or caring for infants 6 months of age
- Emergency medical personnel
- Children from 6 months to 24 years of age
- People ages 25 – 64 with chronic medical conditions

As more vaccine becomes available, healthy 25 – 64 year olds and adults 65 and older should also be vaccinated.

The nasal vaccine is licensed for healthy people from 2 through 49 years of age. The vaccine virus is weakened so it will not cause illness. It is noted that children through 9 years of age should get two doses of vaccine (either nasal or injection), at a minimum of 21 days apart. Older children and adults need only one dose.

The public should contact their health care provider for the H1N1 vaccine.

HSA Public Health will conduct H1N1 flu clinics later this fall when the H1N1 vaccine will be available in larger quantities. "Our H1N1 clinics are designed to be a 'safety net' for the community. Most people should get the vaccination from their regular provider," stated Nancy Fisher, Director of Nursing and Assistant Director at the Health Services Agency. County H1N1 flu clinics are expected to start some time in mid to late November and continue into January. A complete list of dates, times and locations will be released when the clinic schedule is finalized.

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In the meantime, Stanislaus County Health Services Agency Public Health is holding its series of community seasonal flu clinics as scheduled. It is important to protect yourself against the seasonal flu. According to the Centers for Disease Control, every year up to 20% of the population gets the flu, resulting in more than 200,000 hospitalizations and 36,000 deaths nationwide.

For more information on seasonal flu clinics, the public can call the Flu Hotline at 558-8872, or visit www.hsahealth.org. For information on H1N1, the public can visit www.stanemergency.com