



STATE OF CONNECTICUT
EXECUTIVE CHAMBERS

M. JODI RELL
GOVERNOR

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CONTACT: Rich Harris, 860-524-7313
rich.harris@ct.gov

Governor Rell: Swine Flu Vaccine Will Be Free to the Public

Governor M. Jodi Rell announced today that H1N1 (swine) flu vaccinations will be made free to the public and said the state is recruiting doctors and other health care providers to administer the vaccine as soon as the federal government makes it available. Connecticut could initially receive up to 1.8 million doses.

“We are making extensive preparations in advance of flu season to safeguard our citizens,” Governor Rell said. “This year, getting a vaccine is more critical than ever since the swine flu virus has spread around the globe. Swine flu vaccines will be available at no cost and are particularly critical for individuals who are most vulnerable. They will be given priority when the first shipments of vaccine arrive.”

The federal Centers for Disease Control (CDC) anticipates that an H1N1 vaccine will be licensed and ready for distribution by mid-fall of 2009. The Governor said federal funds will be available to reimburse doctors and other providers who administer the vaccine. The vaccine is administered in two doses at least four weeks apart.

State health officials say the most at-risk groups are:

- pregnant women
- children ages 6 months to 4 years old
- children ages 5-18 with chronic medical conditions
- individuals who care for children
- health care professionals with direct patient contact

The Governor said doctors and health care providers interested in administering the vaccine will soon be able to register with the federal government so they can order the vaccine as soon as it becomes available. State health officials say the registration is necessary to compile shipping and contact information to allow the state to have vaccine sent directly to each doctor's office. There is no cost to sign up and registered providers

are not committed to provide the vaccine. Federal registration forms will be available soon and can be accessed through DPH at www.ct.gov/ctfluwatch/providers.

The vaccine is expected to be available in a combination of settings including public health-organized vaccination clinics, private doctors' offices, Visiting Nurse Associations and retail clinics. State health officials say a vaccine for seasonal influenza will also be available this fall.

In April 2009, the first cases of the H1N1 virus, also referred to as the "swine flu," were identified in the U.S. In June 2009, the World Health Organization upgraded the worldwide alert to a pandemic. In response, the CDC began the process of contracting for the production of a novel H1N1 influenza vaccine.

Connecticut has had more than 1,900 confirmed cases of the H1N1 virus and nine deaths, all of whom were people with underlying medical conditions.

Governor Rell last month addressed a statewide conference of school administrators and health professionals to discuss preparations being made at the state and local levels to safeguard students, faculty and staff as the school year opens. The Governor also recently participated in a conference call with U.S. Health and Human Secretary Kathleen Sebelius and other governors to discuss federal and state response.

For more information on what you can do to protect yourself from the flu, please go to www.ct.gov/ctfluwatch.