

 **STATE OF NEW YORK
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH**

Corning Tower The Governor Nelson A. Rockefeller Empire State Plaza Albany, New York 12237

Richard F. Daines, M.D.
Commissioner

James W. Clyne, Jr.
Executive Deputy Commissioner

December 16, 2009

Dear Administrator:

On December 10, 2009, Governor Paterson and Commissioner Daines expanded access to H1N1 influenza vaccine beyond the original priority groups established by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). When vaccine was in short supply, only individuals in priority groups were targeted for vaccination. The supply of vaccine in New York State has consistently increased and the Department of Health (DOH) is now making H1N1 influenza vaccine available to all persons over the age of six months, including residents and staff of long term care facilities.

Long term care facility residents and staff members are at risk for H1N1 influenza. Although most hospitalizations and deaths due to H1N1 influenza have been reported in individuals under the age of 65, if an individual over 65 years of age does become ill with H1N1 influenza he or she is at greater risk of hospitalization and death. At least 13 confirmed H1N1 outbreaks have occurred in long term care facilities in New York State since September 1, 2009, and the vast majority of affected patients were over 65 years old. One outbreak involved 41 elderly residents (an attack rate of 11 percent) and 135 staff members (22 percent).

Vaccination is the best prevention strategy to minimize the impact of this virus on the health and safety of the community, including both residents and staff of long term care facilities. If you are located outside of New York City to obtain vaccine you must be registered with the New York State Department of Health at: <https://hcsteamwork1.health.state.ny.us/pub/toph1n1.html>. After registration, you must place an order for vaccine sufficient to cover your target population, by calling 1-800-KID-SHOT (1-800-543-7468). You may also call this number if you have any questions about registering for or ordering H1N1 vaccine.

If you are located in New York City, you can obtain information and instructions about ordering H1N1 vaccine at <http://nyc.gov/html/doh/flu/html/providers/vaccine.shtml> or by calling 212-676-2323. You may also e-mail: nycflu@health.nyc.gov. Providers must first register in the [Citywide Immunization Registry \(CIR\)](http://nyc.gov/html/doh/html/cir/a03.html) at <http://nyc.gov/html/doh/html/cir/a03.html> and obtain a facility code. Once you have done this, you will need to review and submit a provider agreement online and then submit your vaccine order.

Thank you for your efforts to vaccinate and to prevent H1N1 disease from spreading in your facility.

Sincerely,



Robert L. Burhans
Director
Office of Health Emergency Preparedness



Mark Kissinger
Deputy Commissioner
Office of Long Term Care