



SOUTHWEST PUBLIC HEALTH DISTRICT

1109 North Jackson Street
Albany, Georgia 31701-2022
(229) 430-4599 Fax (229) 430-5143 Emergency 888-430-4590
www.southwestgeorgiapublichealth.org

October 5, 2009

For Immediate Release

Contact: Carolyn Maschke, Public Information Officer

229-430-1969, 229-357-0257; cwmaschke@dhr.state.ga.us

Southwest Health District urges patience as first shipments of H1N1 vaccine trickle in

Even though the initial shipment of Pandemic H1N1 vaccine is expected to arrive in Southwest Georgia around Oct. 6, it won't be time for residents to roll up their sleeves until days or possibly weeks later, says Southwest Health District Health Director Dr. Jacqueline Grant.

"All of us will need patience and flexibility to meet the challenges ahead," said Grant.

The first week's allocation will be very small. It will also be in the form of a nasal spray, which not everyone can take, she said.

"Nasal-spray flu vaccine, also known as LAIV for 'live attenuated influenza vaccine,' is made with live, weakened flu viruses that do not cause the flu," Grant said. "However, it is only for healthy people ages 2 to 49, so many high-risk residents must wait for the shot."

At the top tier of priority groups for the swine flu vaccine are: pregnant women; people caring for infants under 6 months old; healthcare workers who have direct patient contact; children from 6 months to 4 years of age and children 5 through 18 who have chronic medical conditions.

"For example, pregnant women are one of the highest priority groups for H1N1 vaccination, yet they should not receive the nasal-spray form of the vaccine," said Grant. "Children with asthma, another high risk group, also should not take the nasal-spray vaccine."

The reason the nasal-spray vaccine is available before the more widely-used flu shot is because it doesn't take as long to produce, she explained.

"However, rather than wait, the recommendation of the Centers for Disease Control is to get the vaccine out as quickly as possible and immunize people as soon as possible. Therefore, shipments of H1N1 vaccine will be trickling into the states as they become available," Grant said. "We understand that this process may be frustrating, but we are asking the public to be patient with us. By the end of October or beginning of November, we anticipate there will be ample supplies of H1N1 vaccine to ensure that everyone who wants a vaccination will be able to receive one."

Baker	Calhoun	Colquitt	Decatur	Dougherty	Early	Grady
Lee	Miller	Mitchell	Seminole	Terrell	Thomas	Worth

Georgia's initial shipment of 54,800 doses of H1N1 vaccine, being distributed to Public Health Districts, is earmarked for young children.

“Southwest Health District’s portion of this first allotment is 1,900 doses,” said Grant. “Under the population-based distribution formula being used by the state, the doses will be divided among the Southwest Health District’s counties. With such a small amount being received, there is no need for mass vaccination clinics at this time.”

However, flu clinics – including school-located vaccinations – may be offered after the District receives sufficient quantities of flu vaccine later in the season, she said.

H1N1 vaccine is being provided free of charge by Public Health, although administration fees may be charged to Medicaid or Medicare. Private providers will also be offering H1N1 vaccinations. A list of private providers offering H1N1 vaccine to the public will be posted by the State Department of Community Health at www.health.state.ga.us/h1n1.

More information is available by calling local county health departments, by going online to www.southwestgeorgiapublichealth.org or by calling the District’s toll-free Flu Hotline at 800-829-2255.

###

Baker	Calhoun	Colquitt	Decatur	Dougherty	Early	Grady
Lee	Miller	Mitchell	Seminole	Terrell	Thomas	Worth