



SOUTHWEST PUBLIC HEALTH DISTRICT

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County health departments to begin administering H1N1 flu shots Wednesday to priority groups

Beginning Nov. 4, the 14 county health departments in Southwest Health District will begin administering injectable H1N1 vaccine to priority groups most at risk of developing complications if infected with the virus.

“We are dividing and distributing approximately 2,500 doses of the injectable form of the H1N1 vaccine among the counties,” said Southwest Health District Health Director Dr. Jacqueline Grant. “This is in addition to around 1,500 doses of H1N1 nasal spray vaccine already available at county health departments.”

The vaccine is free, but insurance carriers may be billed an administration fee.

“We are excited to be able to offer this option to the community,” said Dougherty County Health Department Director Cheryl Henley. “We are looking forward to being able to reach out to more at-risk populations, particularly those who cannot take the H1N1 nasal mist vaccine.”

Priority groups identified by the National Centers for Disease Control to receive the initial doses of injectable H1N1 vaccine include:

- Pregnant women
- Healthcare and emergency medical personnel
- People who live with or care for infants younger than 6 months
- Anyone from 6 months to 24 years old
- Anyone aged 25 to 64 with underlying medical conditions that put them at risk for flu-related complications

“When our doors open Wednesday morning, we will begin administering H1N1 vaccine, both injectable and nasal mist,” Henley said. “If we have sufficient vaccine, we may also hold extended-hours flu vaccine clinics on Thursdays until 7:30 p.m. to remove barriers for people who have difficulty coming in

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during the work day. Eventually we will have enough H1N1 vaccine for everyone who wants it. But for now, it is best to check with the health department about Thursday extended-hour clinics first.”

Grant stressed that the vaccine is made by the same manufacturers using the same processes as regular seasonal flu vaccine. “No corners were cut to produce this vaccine. People who feel comfortable getting vaccinated against seasonal flu can be comfortable with the safety of the H1N1 vaccine,” she said. “Vaccination is our best protection against this disease.”

For more information about the vaccine and other H1N1-related matters, go online to www.southwestgeorgiapublichealth.org or www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu.

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