

August 3, 2009

H1N1 Influenza A Update

New York Statewide School Health Services Center

- The NYS Department of Health is reporting 36 confirmed cases for the week of 7/12/09 - 7/18/09 with a cumulative total of 1114 cases.
- As of July 30th, the CDC is reporting 5,514 cases of H1N1 Flu with 353 deaths reported. New York's incidence of the H1N1 virus has been downgraded from "widespread" to "regional".
- For specific geographical incidence of the flu, please see the map provided at this link:
 - NYS Map of location of confirmed cases - updated July 3, 2009

The following information is courtesy of School Physician, Dr. Cindy Devore:

- In its July 24 press briefing, the CDC said that it is continuing to see transmission here in the US in places like summer camps, some military academies and similar "close quarters" settings where people from different parts of the country come together. In its briefing, Anne Schuchat from the CDC said that it is "very unusual to have this much transmission of influenza during the (summer) season."
- The US expects to have 160 million doses of H1N1 flu vaccine available in October, when peak flu season begins, according to federal health officials. The vaccine is projected to cover a fraction of the population that is expected to be most affected -- namely school-age children and young adults.
- On July 29, a panel of health experts laid out a plan for vaccinating certain people first. The top priority group, 159 million Americans, or about half the population, would include health care workers and emergency medical responders, because their jobs are critical. It would also include people with the highest risk of complications and severe illness from the new H1N1 virus: pregnant women; children and young adults from 6 months to 24 years; and people ages 25 to 64 with medical problems like asthma, diabetes or heart disease. The vaccine is also recommended for people caring for infants under 6 months, to prevent them from infecting the babies, because infants are at high risk but cannot themselves be vaccinated because they are too young for the vaccine to work. Most people will need two shots for swine flu, in addition to their annual flu shot (*New York Times*, 7/30).
- HHS Secretary Kathleen Sebelius said that Congress has provided enough funding in the 2009 supplemental spending legislation to buy the bulk supplies needed to produce an H1N1 vaccine (*CQ Today*, 7/23).
- CDC estimates that if the H1N1 vaccine and other prevention measures fail, 20% to 40% of US residents could be infected with the flu virus within the next two years -- double the amount that usually get sick from the seasonal flu. A federal panel on Thursday, July 23 recommended that FDA approve or license the new H1N1 flu virus vaccine without waiting to receive clinical trial results— a common FDA practice for approving seasonal vaccines.