



News from the Somerset County Board of Chosen Freeholders

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Somerset County Health Dept. Receives H1N1 Vaccine *Will Distribute to Registered Private Providers*

SOMERVILLE –The Somerset County Department of Health has received a supply of H1N1 swine flu vaccine. County Health Director John Horensky said Somerset County plans to distribute supplies of H1N1 vaccine to previously registered private providers in the county, such as physicians' offices and health-care clinics, to reach those people most likely to be affected by H1N1.

Vaccine will also be offered during public clinics located in the municipalities covered by the Somerset County Department of Health – Bedminster, Far Hills, Franklin Township, North Plainfield and Rocky Hill.

"Thanks to our proactive efforts, we are rapidly able to use the doses we receive to protect many of our most vulnerable residents," said Freeholder Deputy Director Jack M. Ciattarelli, health liaison. "The public can find the most updated details on locations and times of our public clinics on the county Health Department's website at www.co.somerset.nj.us/health. Our website also includes a link where residents in identified priority groups can schedule an appointment for vaccination at one of these public clinics.

"It's also very important to get a seasonal-flu shot this year," he said. "Although this shot doesn't necessarily protect against H1N1, it will help keep people out of hospitals where they might come in contact with H1N1 flu. Our website lists seasonal-flu clinics in our area. People also can get the seasonal-flu shot from many private physicians and health clinics."

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), five priority groups have been identified to receive the H1N1 vaccination at this time. These priority groups, based on those most likely to be affected by H1N1, are:

- pregnant women
- household contacts and caregivers for children younger than 6 months of age
- health-care and emergency medical services personnel
- all people from 6 months through 24 years of age
- persons aged 25 through 64 years who have health conditions associated with higher risk of medical complications from influenza (healthy adults age 65 and up are not considered to be in the H1N1 high-risk group, according to the CDC)

Once the demand in every New Jersey county for individuals in the priority target groups has been met, a determination will be made by the New Jersey Department of Health and Senior Services, in consultation with county and local health agencies, to start holding vaccination clinics for the general population.

Vaccination against flu is a good health practice, but other healthy habits also are important in preventing colds, flu and many other diseases. To prevent the spread of unwanted germs, remember to cover coughs and sneezes with the inside of your elbow, wash hands frequently and stay home when sick.

"These are simple but smart things that everyone can do to keep themselves and others healthy," said Freeholder Ciattarelli.

For the most current information on seasonal and H1N1 flu, as well as a link to schedule of H1N1 vaccination clinics, visit the county Health Department's website at www.co.somerset.nj.us/health. For clinic information and registration, call the Greater Somerset H1N1 Shotline at (908) 533-9330.