

Official State Release on Flu Vaccination

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With so much reporting and information on the swine flu pandemic, we thought it would be helpful for our readers to view an official statement from the California Department of Public Health—unedited and unabridged. This statement was released last Thursday, Oct. 8, 2009 and addresses the need and prioritization of swine flu vaccination.

The following is the complete text of the state's release:

GET VACCINATED, SAYS STATE PUBLIC HEALTH DIRECTOR

SACRAMENTO – With the state's H1N1 death toll at 206, the director of the California Department of Public Health (CDPH), Dr. Mark Horton, on Thursday urged Californians to get vaccinated against the H1N1 flu virus in the weeks ahead. He also highlighted new tools to fight the flu, including features on the Department's Web site and a video contest aimed at promoting steps people can take to prevent illness.

"We face an unusual challenge that requires all of us to be prepared in the months ahead," said Horton in reference to the widespread infection of the H1N1 virus in California that has now hospitalized 2,748 people and killed 206. "Part of that response is staying informed, learning if you are in a targeted group for vaccination and making plans to get vaccinated as the vaccine continues to arrive in our state."

Approximately 400,000 doses of H1N1 nasal spray vaccine arrived in California this week. More doses are expected in the coming weeks, including the injectable version of the vaccine.

"As vaccine will be delivered to us in weekly allotments through the fall and early winter, we need to ensure that the early doses get to the targeted groups," said Horton, "but, we fully expect that, in time, enough vaccine will be available for everyone."

Children from two through 18 years of age are the targeted group for the initial doses of the nasal spray vaccine. Healthy people under 50 years of age who are parents and caregivers of children younger than 6 months of age are also part of the initial target group. Pregnant women and healthcare workers should be at the head of the line for the first doses of injectable vaccine when it arrives in the state later this month.

Horton also directed the public to the CDPH Web site, <http://www.cdph.ca.gov/Pages/Default.aspx> as a source of information. The site includes audio recordings from doctors, videos and printed materials for businesses, schools, health professionals, pregnant women and travelers. Much of the information is available in both English and Spanish.

The "CDPH Film Fest — Lights, Camera, Save Lives" is another CDPH effort underway to help Californians learn more about preventing the H1N1 virus. The deadline for the video competition is October 16. Contestants are asked to produce a short video that will motivate people to take steps to help prevent the spread of H1N1 and seasonal flu.