

The ISDH sent out the following release statewide to the media this afternoon:

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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December 3, 2009

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**STATE HEALTH OFFICIALS TO BEGIN NEW 2009 H1N1 FLU
VACCINATION STRATEGY**

INDIANAPOLIS – State health officials announced today a new strategy to vaccinate all Hoosiers against the 2009 H1N1 influenza virus. For the next two weeks, the Indiana State Department of Health will be working to get as much vaccine as possible to schools, colleges, and universities.

“We have a window of opportunity now to vaccinate school-age children and college students before winter break,” said State Health Commissioner Judy Monroe, M.D. “Instead of distributing to counties strictly based on population, local health departments will be ordering the number of doses of the vaccine they need to support clinics before school dismissal.”

Starting the week of December 20, the State Health Department will be working with local health departments and pharmacies to make the 2009 H1N1 flu vaccine available to the general public.

“We now have enough H1N1 flu vaccine in the state for about 25 percent of the population, and continue to have more available each week,” said Dr. Monroe. “This is exactly what we have been waiting for to allow us to start vaccinating outside the targeted high-risk groups.”

Indiana was one of the first states to begin administering the 2009 H1N1 vaccine to the target groups at the beginning of October. As of December 1, Indiana has ordered a total of 1,429,600 doses of the H1N1 flu vaccine.

Based on data from the Children & Hoosiers Immunization Registry Program, at least 17 percent of the estimated “high risk” persons in Indiana have been vaccinated, with persons six months to 24 years of age receiving 61 percent of the vaccinations. Local health departments and providers who give out the H1N1 flu vaccine enter this data into the immunization registry, and there can be a delay between vaccinations being given and then being recorded. So, state health officials believe the number of Hoosiers vaccinated against H1N1 flu may be even higher.

The numbers of Hoosiers reporting influenza-like illness has continued to decrease over the past five weeks, but Dr. Monroe reminds Hoosiers that it is still important to get vaccinated in order to prevent a possibly more severe third wave of illness.

“We are cautiously optimistic about the decrease in reported illness, but we don’t want the public to become complacent,” said Dr. Monroe. “Influenza occurs in waves, and it is possible to still get a third more severe wave. We normally see a peak in seasonal flu activity in the winter.”

Receiving the vaccine is the best way to prevent the spread of 2009 H1N1 influenza. However, Dr. Monroe encourages Hoosiers to continue practicing the 3 Cs:

- **Clean**- Wash your hands often,
- **Cover**- Cover your cough/sneeze with a tissue, and

- **Contain-** Stay home if you are sick.

State health officials say the public is not being asked to register before receiving the 2009 H1N1 flu vaccine. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC's) Cyber Security Incident Response Team has received reports of fraudulent emails (phishing) referencing a CDC-sponsored State Vaccination Program. The messages ask users to create a personal H1N1 (swine flu) Vaccination Profile on the cdc.gov Web site. The message then states that anyone that has reached the age of 18 has to have his/her personal Vaccination Profile on the cdc.gov site. The CDC has NOT implemented a state vaccination program requiring registration on www.cdc.gov. Users that click on the email are at risk of having malicious code installed on their system. The CDC reminds users to take the following steps to reduce the risk of being a victim of a phishing attack:

- Do not follow unsolicited links and do not open or respond to unsolicited email messages.
- Use caution when visiting un-trusted Web sites.
- Use caution when entering personal information online.

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Don't Get the Flu. Don't Spread the Flu. Get Vaccinated Today.