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October 1, 2009

TO: Each Supervisor

FROM: Jonathan E. Fielding, M.D., M.P.H.
Director and Health Officer

SUBJECT: **PANDEMIC INFLUENZA H1N1 AND SEASONAL FLU PLANNING – UPDATE #3**

This is a follow-up to the August 18, 2009 report to provide an update on the Department of Public Health (DPH) preparation and planning activities for pandemic H1N1 influenza (H1N1) and seasonal influenza.

DPH Planning Activities

DPH continues to conduct planning and preparation activities for the anticipated availability of the H1N1 vaccine beginning October 2009. An H1N1 internal steering committee and seven workgroups continue to meet regularly to finalize the operational plans for disseminating the H1N1 vaccine and monitoring potential disease spread throughout the county. Current efforts include finalizing contracts with public and private partners to assist in vaccine dissemination and enrolling provider partners in the California Health Alert Network (CAHAN) to receive updates from the State on H1N. On September 21, 2009, DPH initiated an Incident Command Structure (ICS) in order to centralize all DPH H1N1 activities.

Outreach

DPH is continuing with its efforts to reach out to the media and the public to reinforce the message of prevention and who should receive the vaccination. Some of the key efforts underway are:

- Creating a speaker's bureau to provide informational talks and trainings on H1N1 for community and clinical groups throughout the county;
- Utilizing the new DPH Community Listserv along with the Office of Emergency Management pathways to disseminate community updates in 11 threshold languages;

- Using media events to reiterate the importance of prevention and vaccination. On September 21, 2009, DPH held a press conference at LAC/USC medical center in recognition of National Adult Immunization Week, during which the importance of adult immunizations, including seasonal influenza vaccine was reiterated. The press conference also emphasized the importance of pregnant women obtaining the H1N1 vaccine; and
- Maintaining the DPH website to include important information for the community and providers on prevention, vaccination, H1N1 news, and educational resources.

Funding for H1N1 Response Activities

DPH applied for and received the Public Health Emergency Response (PHER) Phase I and Phase II funding distributed through the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). In addition, on September 15, 2009, DPH submitted an application for PHER Phase III funding in the amount of $25,106,330. This funding will be used to further accelerate planning efforts for the large-scale H1N1 vaccination campaign beginning this fall and to maintain the capacity to detect and monitor the influenza virus through laboratory testing, epidemiology, surveillance, public health investigations, and other pandemic response activities.

H1N1 Vaccine

On September 11, 2009, the Department of Health and Human Services Secretary Kathleen Sebelius announced that based on early reports from the National Institutes of Health on the adult clinical trials, the H1N1 vaccine induces a robust immune response in most healthy adults eight to ten days after a single dose. Therefore, the recommended adult dosage has been decreased from two doses to one, which will result in more adult vaccine availability for a widespread dissemination. Clinical studies currently underway are expected to provide additional information about the optimal dose in children.

On September 14, 2009, the Federal Drug Administration announced that it has approved four vaccines against the H1N1 virus. The vaccines will be distributed nationally after the initial lots become available. The CDC has indicated that the vaccine may be available to local jurisdictions starting October 9-10, 2009 in limited supply, with distribution directed by state and local public health agencies. To assist state and local agencies in this effort, the CDC launched a new webpage on their H1N1 website with resources: http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1\flu/statelocal/index.htm.

DPH continues to recruit external partners in order to rapidly, efficiently, and effectively reach the approximately 5.5 million people in the County who are within the CDC priority groups. To date, over 3,000 partners including health plans, medical groups and providers, community clinics, hospitals, schools, and universities have signed up to give vaccines. All orders for the H1N1 vaccine can now be submitted on the State's website: http://calpanflu.org. Partial orders of the vaccine will be made available to providers serving priority groups until a more ample supply is available. It is anticipated that adequate vaccine will be available for all individuals in the priority groups within the next three months.

DPH will also distribute the vaccine through vaccine events or Points of Distribution (PODs) held throughout the County. The focus of these PODs will be on residents who are uninsured and do not have a regular healthcare provider. The PODs will tentatively start on October 23, 2009.

As with seasonal influenza, persons in the priority groups will be encouraged to seek the vaccine through their regular health care providers.

Seasonal Influenza Planning

On September 22, 2009, DPH began operation of its seasonal flu clinics. The schedule is now available on the DPH website at http://www.publichealth.lacounty.gov/ip/flu/index.htm

DPH's seasonal influenza planning efforts continue to focus on encouraging the distribution of the majority the seasonal flu vaccine through partner providers, while maintaining a small allotment as a seasonal flu safety net (e.g., outbreak control and other potential incidences).

We will continue to keep you apprised as H1N1 planning and response activities progress. If you have any questions or need additional information, please let me know.

JEF:al
PH:905:008-3

c: Chief Executive Officer
Acting County Counsel
Executive Officer, Board of Supervisors