



H1N1 Partner Briefing

Date: September 30, 2009
To: All Rhode Islanders
From: Director of Health, David R. Gifford, MD, MPH
Re: Information on H1N1 in Rhode Island

Local Influenza Activity Level: Regional¹, H1N1 predominant circulating strain
Rhode Island²: 2 hospitalized cases, 0 deaths
National Report³: 10,082 hospitalized cases, 936 deaths
Sentinel Surveillance (% of visits due to influenza-like illness): Rhode Island: 3.3%, New England Region: 1.7%, Nation: 4.1%

Tamiflu available from area pharmacies for uninsured patients

Antiviral drugs are prescription medicines used to treat people who are very sick with flu (such as people who need to be hospitalized). They may also be prescribed for sick people who are at high risk of flu-related complications. Starting Monday, October 5, uninsured patients with valid Tamiflu prescriptions will be able to get these prescriptions filled for free at Rhode Island Stop & Shop, Rite Aid, and CVS pharmacies. Patients with insurance will continue to be processed through their insurance plans.

New flu guidance for community and faith-based organizations

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services has developed a guide for community and faith-based organizations to help them prepare for and respond to flu during the 2009-2010 season. These organizations can help keep people healthy during the flu season. Leaders in these organizations can communicate important health information to people, reinforce flu prevention messages, support local vaccination efforts, and link vulnerable populations to vital resources. To read the complete guide, please see <http://flu.gov/professional/community/cfboguidance.html>.

Stay home when you are sick

Staying home when you are sick is one of the best ways to prevent spreading your illness to other people. People with flu-like symptoms should stay home and avoid contact with other people as much as possible, except to seek medical care. People should stay home from work, school, travel, shopping, social events, and public gatherings until they have been fever-free for at least 24 hours without the use of fever-reducing medications. People who work in healthcare settings should stay home for 7 days after the onset of symptoms or until symptoms disappear, whichever is longer. If you are sick and you must leave home (for example, to seek medical care), wear a facemask if you have one, cover your coughs and sneezes with a tissue, and wash your hands often with soap and warm water or use alcohol-based hand gels. For more information about caring for sick people at home, please see <http://www.health.ri.gov/flu/about/treatment/> and <http://www.health.ri.gov/news/H1N1Advisories/CareOfIndividualsInTheHome.pdf>.

Pneumonia vaccine reminder

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends that certain people receive the pneumococcal vaccine. Vaccination continues to be important for these individuals this year, since pneumonia

¹ Rhode Island reported Regional activity for the week of September 20-26. Influenza is circulating in 2 regions of the state. For details see <http://www.health.ri.gov/flu/about/surveillance/>.

² Influenza-associated hospitalizations and deaths since September 1, 2009

³ Influenza and pneumonia-associated hospitalizations and deaths from August 30 – September 19, 2009

WASH HANDS/ALCOHOL GEL SNEEZE IN ARM STAY HOME WHEN SICK

is a serious potential complication of the flu. Pneumococcal vaccination should not be repeated more frequently than once every five years. Last year, the recommendations for who should receive the vaccine were expanded to include adults who smoke and adults who have asthma. For more information about who should receive the pneumococcal vaccine, talk to your healthcare provider or see <http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/pubs/vis/downloads/vis-ppv.pdf>.

Resources

- HEALTH at <http://www.health.ri.gov>;
- Archived partner briefings and regular news updates: <http://www.health.ri.gov/news/flu/>
- H1N1 Information Line (M-F 8:30am- 4:30pm) 401-222-8022
- H1N1 email address h1n1@health.ri.gov
- <http://www.flu.gov>