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DHHS Expands Priority Groups for H1N1 Vaccination

Concord, NH-The New Hampshire Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) today announced it is expanding the H1N1 vaccination campaign to include additional groups of people who are at higher risk for complications from H1N1. In addition, the state will begin hosting vaccination clinics in the next several weeks for certain high-risk adults.

Based on Centers for Disease Control and New Hampshire Ethics guidelines, the following groups are now eligible to receive the H1N1 vaccine:

- People caring for or living with infants younger than 6 months old (including partners of pregnant women)
- Children 6 months to 4 years old
- People 18-24 years old with underlying medical conditions

In addition, the following groups remain eligible to receive the vaccine:

- Health care workers and first responders with direct patient contact
- Pregnant women
- Children 6 months to 18 years old with chronic medical conditions

"It is critical that those most at risk receive high priority for the H1N1 vaccine," said Public Health Director Dr. Jose Montero. "We encourage those who are in high-risk groups to get vaccinated, as the H1N1 vaccine is the best protection for you and your loved ones against this illness."

"To expedite the distribution of the vaccine, we are asking people over age 18 to receive their vaccine at clinics that will be held across the state in the next several weeks, rather than their doctors' offices," Dr. Montero said. "Children and pregnant women should continue to receive the vaccine through their health care providers."

"We are asking at-risk patients to make appointments to ensure there are adequate vaccine supplies available," Dr. Montero said. "We also continue to ask other citizens to allow those who face the greatest risks to get vaccinated first."

The clinics will be organized through local colleges and through the State's All Health Hazard Regions, and will be by appointment only. Given the availability of vaccine supplies from manufacturers, Public Health estimates that it will take several weeks to vaccinate members of these groups.

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