

Wednesday, 23 September 2009

NSW roll-out of Pandemic (H1N1) 2009 Influenza Vaccination to commence

Deputy Premier and Minister for Health Carmel Tebbutt today joined NSW Chief Health Officer, Dr Kerry Chant, to announce that from next week, people in New South Wales will be able to receive the vaccination for Pandemic (H1N1) 2009 Influenza.

Ms Tebbutt said the roll-out of the highly anticipated vaccine will begin next Wednesday, 30 September 2009 for anyone aged 10 years-old and over.

“Following registration by the Therapeutic Goods Administration, the new pandemic vaccine will be available throughout the state from next week,” Ms Tebbutt said.

“Anyone who would like to be vaccinated against the pandemic will be eligible to access the vaccine through their GP.

“I recommend that people call ahead and make an appointment with their GP, ensuring they have enough stocks available.

“The swine flu pandemic has been a significant health issue for communities across the globe, and here in NSW hospital staff and GPs have worked tirelessly to ensure NSW families receive the best possible care and attention.

“I would like to thank them all as we move into the next phase of our response – the roll out of this vaccine.”

Dr Chant said human adult trials had proven that the vaccine was similar to the seasonal influenza vaccine, with it being extremely safe, having minimal adverse effects and requiring only one injection for adults.

“NSW Health has been facilitating vaccine roll-out across the state, and to date, over 1300 orders from practices, private hospitals, aged care facilities and public health facilities have been received by the State Vaccine Centre,” Ms Chant said.

“I would strongly urge any GPs who have not yet placed orders for the vaccination to do so, to ensure that NSW Health delivers to their surgery in time for the start date next week.

“NSW Health has a well-established vaccine distribution mechanism via a central vaccine centre,” said Dr Chant.

“Almost two million doses are ready for the start date next Wednesday, with another two million scheduled to be rolled out in early October.”

Those considered more vulnerable to the pandemic include:

- Front line health care and community care workers;
- People with underlying chronic medical conditions, ie. heart and lung disease, cancers, HIV, asthma, diabetes;
- People who are morbidly obese
- Indigenous people



- Pregnant women; and
- Parents and guardians of children aged 0-6 months.

Director of Communicable Diseases, Dr Jeremy McAnulty, said NSW Health was working with GP groups and Aboriginal Medical Services to ensure that the vaccine is provided in areas where there are difficulties accessing primary care services.

“Our priority is to make sure all people living in NSW have access to the vaccination, and outreach services will be established - including mobile clinics with Aboriginal health workers – to encourage take-up of the vaccine,” Dr McAnulty said.

In the past week, a 64-year-old woman identified with Pandemic (H1N1) 2009 influenza has died. The woman, who had chronic underlying conditions, brings the state’s total of deaths to 49.

Dr Chant said that despite the death this week, the number of people with influenza-like illness has continued to decline in NSW following a peak in the epidemic in July.

“The number of influenza-like illness presentations to emergency departments continues to decline and is lower than the largest seasonal peak of recent years.

“With the vaccine roll-out ready to begin, the Government is committed to combating the spread of this new strain of influenza,” Dr Chant said.

A weekly report, Case Numbers and Statistics, which describes the progress of the Pandemic (H1N1) 2009 influenza epidemic in NSW, is available on the NSW Health website at:

www.health.nsw.gov.au/publichealth/swine_flu.asp

More information is available from the NSW Health website and the Pandemic (H1N1) 2009 Hotline 180 2007.

A range of health information can be accessed online at <http://www.health.nsw.gov.au>

