



Wednesday, 30 September 2009

Pandemic (H1N1) 2009 Influenza vaccination commences

Deputy Premier and Minister for Health, Carmel Tebbutt, today joined NSW Acting Chief Health Officer, Dr Greg Stewart, as the first doses of the Pandemic (H1N1) 2009 Influenza vaccine were administered.

Ms Tebbutt said people now have the opportunity to protect themselves and their families against pandemic flu by getting vaccinated.

“Anyone who would like to be vaccinated against the pandemic will be eligible to get the vaccine through their GP,” Ms Tebbutt said.

“The vaccine is the best defence against pandemic flu.”

Acting Chief Health Officer, Dr Greg Stewart, said NSW Health has been facilitating vaccine roll-out across the state, and to date, more than 2,000 orders from practices, private hospitals, aged care facilities and public health facilities have been dispatched by the State Vaccine Centre.

“In the past week over 600,000 doses of the vaccine have been delivered across the state – from Broken Hill to Eden and the Tweed Valley,” Dr Stewart said.

“It is important that people call ahead and make an appointment with their GP.”

Dr Stewart strongly urged any GPs who have not yet placed orders for the vaccination to do so, to assist in getting the vaccine to their patients. GPs will provide the vaccine, using their normal billing arrangements.

“Although the vaccine will be available for everyone aged 10 and over, I encourage the most vulnerable in our communities to access this vaccination in order to protect themselves and/or those they care for,” he added.

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.

Carmel Tebbutt MP

Deputy Premier | Minister for Health



Dr Stewart, said NSW Health was working with GP groups and Aboriginal Medical Services to ensure that the vaccine was 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, in some areas, mobile clinics with Aboriginal health workers – to encourage take-up of the vaccine.

“We are anticipating that a vaccine for children nine years and under will be available soon once further information is obtained from clinical trials,” he added.

Dr Stewart said while the number of patients affected by the pandemic strain continues to decrease, it is possible that higher levels of flu will occur this summer than would normally be seen.

“It’s still important for people to get vaccinated,” he said.

More information is available from the Pandemic (H1N1) 2009 Hotline 180 2007 and at the NSW Health website www.emergency.health.nsw.gov.au/swineflu/index.asp

A range of health information can be accessed online at www.health.nsw.gov.au

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

