

St. Joseph County H1N1 Summit

9/18/09

Q & A

Q: In the case of prohibiting public gatherings, can exceptions be made i.e. Blood Drives to ensure an adequate supply for community?

A: **Kelly Jolliff**- Reminder that cancellation/postponement of public gathering is based on increased severity of the virus. Likely that revised blood donor regulations would be the decision at a higher level. In the case of blood donor services, it is likely that revised methods would need to be implemented to ensure the social distancing measures. Remember prevention measures all year round!

Q: What steps should we take in the workplace besides vaccine? Can employers do anything now?

A: **Kelly Jolliff**- CDC guidance for businesses and employers found at:

<http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/business/guidance/>

- Key steps at current severity include: **Send sick employees home** and advise them and their families that sick people should stay home until at least 24 hours after they no longer have a fever (expect sick employees to be out for about 3-5 days in most cases).
- **Clean surfaces and items** that are more likely to have frequent hand contact with cleaning agents that are usually used in these areas.
- **Improve hand hygiene and cough etiquette.** Place posters in the worksite that encourages cough and sneeze etiquette. Ensure soap and water, and alcohol-based hand sanitizers are in the workplace.
- **Encourage employee vaccination** for seasonal influenza and 2009 H1N1 (as available).
- **Prepare for increased numbers of employee absences**, and plan ways for essential functions to continue.
- **Prepare for possibility of school dismissal or temporary closure of child care programs.** Ensure that your leave policies are flexible and non-punitive.
- Plan for possibility of increased severity.

Q: Do retail stores, offices, banks, etc. have an obligation to notify customers of known cases of H1N1 at their location?

A: **Kelly Jolliff**- CDC guidance for businesses and employers found at:

<http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/business/guidance/>. If an employee becomes ill at work, inform fellow employees of their possible exposure in the workplace to influenza-like illness but maintain confidentiality as required by the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). Employees exposed to a sick co-worker should monitor themselves for symptoms of influenza-like illness and stay home if they are sick. Follow action steps to promote prevention measures for employees and customers in your facility. Notifying customers of exposure not required.

Q: We do not have to report positive H1N1 cases to the St. Joseph County Health Department or ISDH? Not anymore? Because it is widespread?

A: **Kelly Jolliff**- Influenza is not a required reportable disease (with the exception of influenza related deaths). We know that the majority (about 98%) of all influenza A viruses are the novel H1N1. We are no longer investing individual cases of novel H1N1 like we did in the spring. Some labs do report, and other surveillance measures are in place to track illness rates (Sentinel Physicians, Syndromic Surveillance, and newly established hospital influenza like illness, pneumonia related hospitalizations rates). While providers are not required to report positive influenza cases to the SJCHD, any information about illness rates and positive influenza results are encouraged to provide us with a better picture of local activity.

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Q: If a person is fairly sure they've had the H1N1 but it was not confirmed, should they get vaccine or are they now immune?

A: **Dr. Bob Hunt-** Vaccine is recommended regardless of possible previous illness. Not getting vaccinated would be a gamble without knowing for sure which strain of the influenza virus you had.

Q: How high of a fever would someone have to be considered not to get the flu vaccine?

A: **Dr. Hunt-** 38°C or 100.4°F

Q: Live vaccine-please clarify when they can be given together. My understanding-can't combine both live flu vaccines at same time because they may negate each other. Can give 2 live vaccines at same time-like MMR + Flu Mist sometime-otherwise 28 day wait. I think I have heard could give the attenuated and H1N1 live at same time.

A: **Barbara Baker-** If a child has received a live vaccine- Flu Mist, MMR or Varicella there needs to be 28 days between the next live vaccine. They can be given at the same time- ie MMR and LAIV but the next live vaccine must be after 28 days. You can give the flu shot at any time after the live vaccine. Cannot give live seasonal Flu Mist and H1N1 Flu Mist at the same time!

Q: Is ISDH/CDC requiring glove use during administration?

A: **Barbara Baker-** No-there is no federal requirement for glove use during vaccine administration. This is provider preference only.

Q: Would you want local congregations to conduct seasonal/H1N1 clinics?

A: **Barbara Baker-** It may be difficult to reach the target populations as so many congregations have more elderly then younger populations. The Health Department does not have the resources to do this for all, and it would be difficult to pick and choose congregations.

Q: Will the H1N1 vaccine be available for businesses to protect workers?

A: **Barbara Baker-** Initial vaccine availability will be targeted to the CDC/ACIP 5 target groups to ensure those who; 1) are at greatest risk for becoming infected, 2) greatest risk for transmitting to others, and 3) greatest risk for influenza related complications are protected. Once enough vaccine is available it will be expanded to everyone else.

Q: What kind of masks are recommended for long term care facilities and where can you be fit tested?

A: **Susan Kraska-** Mask guidance continues to be a controversial topic. N95s or PAPRs are still the recommended PPE for HCWs caring for confirmed, probable, or suspect cases of H1N1. For N95s to work best, they must be fit tested. Generally you should be able to get fit testing through who you purchased them through. The issue of how to protect workers with limited mask supply is a constant challenge. Guidance on masks can be found at <http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/masks.htm>.

Q: Do you know if other states have a 211 type system?

A: **Dave Sisk-** YES. Here is a link to the US map of 2-11- coverage.

<http://www.211us.org/documents/2-1-1%20Coverage%20Map-April%202009.pdf>