



JONATHAN E. FIELDING, M.D., M.P.H.
Director and Health Officer

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December 15, 2009

Dear Clinical Provider:

Effective tomorrow, December 16, 2009, providers in Los Angeles County may provide H1N1 vaccine to any patient over the age of six months for whom it is not medically contraindicated. Adequate vaccine supply (more than 2.4 million doses) has arrived in Los Angeles County to allow us to begin to provide it to individuals outside of the five priority groups. If you have not yet received enough vaccine to satisfy the demand among your patients who are in the five priority groups, you may defer expanding vaccination until this demand has been met. We will continue to allocate H1N1 vaccine to all providers until all orders have been filled. All interested retail pharmacies will now be allocated to receive some vaccine by the end of December.

While the second wave of the H1N1 pandemic has crested both nationally and locally, the future remains uncertain. History suggests that the H1N1 influenza virus may cause a third wave of infection in the months ahead, so it is very important to make strong efforts now to immunize as many persons as possible. If you currently have more vaccine than you can use, please contact our Immunization Program Call Center at (866) 756-1512 to discuss reallocating your supply to other providers who do not have enough. Also, contact the Immunization Program if you need more vaccine than you have ordered. While thimerosal-free vaccine is available in ample supply to administer to pregnant women and children less than three years of age, the state of California has extended until September 30, 2010 the exemption to allow the use of thimerosal-containing vaccines in these groups.

Even as we expand our vaccination efforts, it is also very important to continue to promote vaccine for patients in the five priority groups, as these persons are at highest risk of complications from influenza infection: caregivers and family members of children less than 6 months of age, pregnant women, persons between the ages of 6 months and 24 years, persons between the ages of 25 and 64 years with medical conditions that place them at increased risk of complications from influenza, and health-care/emergency medical services workers.

As more vaccine arrives in the weeks ahead, I request your strong support in promoting its use. As always, I greatly appreciate your support as we work together to protect the public's health.

With best regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jonathan E. Fielding M.D.". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Jonathan E. Fielding, M.D., M.P.H.
Director and Health Officer

JEF:jdg