

Volunteers Needed! H1N1 Mass Vaccination Clinics

Current Situation

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has stated that in recent weeks, approximately 99% of all subtyped Influenza A viruses being reported are 2009 Influenza A (H1N1) viruses, which are continuing to increase. In Pennsylvania, the Pennsylvania Department of Health (PA DOH) is reporting influenza-like illnesses at a widespread level. PA DOH, through the Office of Public Health Preparedness (OPHP), the Bureau of Community Health Systems (BCHS) and the six local health district offices, continues to prepare for influenza response operations which focus on coordinating and conducting mass vaccination clinics for the 2009 H1N1 virus in order to help control this public health emergency.

Mass Vaccination Clinics

Public mass vaccination clinics will be held to administer the 2009 H1N1 vaccine to individuals in priority groups that cannot access the vaccine at their school, work, or healthcare provider. The MVC's will provide vaccines to individuals when the vaccine recommendation no longer limits or prioritizes persons to be vaccinated. As part of its preparedness efforts, the PA DOH is searching for volunteers who can provide assistance for the mass vaccination clinics during this public health emergency.

Volunteers Needed!

Mass vaccination clinics will require volunteers who have medical and non-medical skills to help augment public health staff.

Medically trained personnel will be needed to act as vaccine administrators and onsite medical staff. These volunteers may include retired (but still licensed) nurses, other community nurses, physician assistants, certified pharmacists and medical or nursing students working in conjunction with their institutional faculty or medical director. On site vaccine administration training will be provided for those practitioners who have not given an injectible or intranasal medication recently or simply want a refresher with these procedures

Non-medical personnel will also be needed to provide administrative and logistics support, including traffic control, parking, registration, restocking supplies (opening band aids), and organizing the lines of people waiting for their vaccination. Most of these positions can be staffed by any volunteer after they receive a short briefing that will be provided prior to each shift.

How to Volunteer

Individuals interested in helping the community during this public health emergency can register on the State Emergency Registry of Volunteers in Pennsylvania (SERVPA) secure website at www.serv.pa.gov. This process should take approximately 20-30 minutes to complete. By enrolling with SERVPA, volunteers that are deployed to assist in the mass vaccination clinics are afforded certain protections from civil liability and/or reimbursement for workers' compensation under PA Code Title 4 Chapter 115. Additionally, civil liability protections are offered under other state and federal laws.

Because the number of doses and the demand for vaccination are unknown at this time, specific dates and locations of the mass vaccination clinics are not yet finalized. The mass vaccination clinics are expected to start around mid-November in all Pennsylvania counties. Once volunteers register with SERVPA, they will be provided updates on the locations and dates of the clinics. PA DOH will also work with individuals on finding suitable dates and locations in order to ensure that their efforts are utilized.

Your assistance with mass vaccination clinics is essential to the success of this important public health mission. Please take time now to register in SERVPA and be available to help your community respond to the 2009 H1N1 outbreak.

Additional information is available by contacting the PA DOH Southcentral District Office at (717) 787-8092.