



State of Louisiana

Department of Health and Hospitals
Nursing Services

September 25, 2009

Dear Colleague:

Our Louisiana communities need your help. Novel H1N1 influenza, referred to as swine flu, is a new influenza virus first detected in humans in April 2009. H1N1 was declared a pandemic in June. The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) developed guidelines for immunization of individuals at high risk for serious illness and death resulting from exposure to the H1N1 virus. An estimated 1/3 of Louisiana's 4.4 million residents fall in the high risk category. These individuals will receive priority for vaccination. As more vaccine becomes available, it will be offered to everyone else.

High risk groups include:

- Persons ages 6 months through 24 years
- Pregnant women
- Household contacts and caregivers of children younger than 6 months of age
- Healthcare workers & emergency medical services personnel
- People of any age with certain chronic medical conditions

Vaccines are one of the most important medical interventions for reducing illness and death during a pandemic. Vaccine development is underway, and clinical trials are being conducted to ensure the production of a safe, effective vaccine. The initial distribution of vaccine is now expected in mid-October.

The State of Louisiana Department of Health and Hospitals Office of Public Health will host a vaccination campaign this fall and winter in an effort to prevent the spread of H1N1 influenza. We request your assistance as a volunteer vaccinator at local health units or on strike teams in school and day care centers in your area. We are committed to protecting our communities, preventing infection and reducing the number of individuals affected by H1N1 influenza illness.

Nurses play an integral part in providing health services, education, and information. We value and appreciate your selfless dedication in providing health care to Louisiana citizens.

To volunteer, register, and/or to receive additional information regarding this vaccination effort, please contact Sherhonda Harper, RN, Statewide Nurse Consultant, at (225) 763-5470 or email Sherhonda.Harper@la.gov.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Clair Millet".

Clair Millet, APRN, MN, PHCNS, BC
Chief Nurse
Department of Health and Hospitals
Office of Public Health