



Oct. 21, 2009

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Weekly H1N1 influenza update ***Wednesday, Oct. 21, 2009***

The H1N1 influenza vaccine is now in Oregon but, as announced by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control last week, is being manufactured more slowly than expected. At the same time, demand for H1N1 vaccine continues to be high. As of Friday, Oct. 16, approximately 5 percent of the vaccine needed for priority groups had arrived in Oregon and more is expected soon.

"The vaccine is coming but not as quickly as hoped by the manufacturers," says Dr. Mel Kohn, acting-director of Oregon Public Health Division. "That is disappointing and we ask that people be patient and keep checking back for local flu clinics so they can get the vaccine when it is available in their communities."

Flu clinics are handled locally with the assistance of county public health departments and tribes. Because of the delay of vaccine, some flu clinics have been rescheduled and others are opening later than expected. The Oregon Public Health Division is surveying the counties on a regular basis and is keeping information as current as possible at flu.oregon.gov and the statewide flu hotline of 1-800-978-3040.

Since Sept. 1, 2009, 326 people in 20 counties have been hospitalized in Oregon with influenza-like illness; eight people have died.

Dr. Kohn says that because the H1N1 flu season is expected to last well into the spring, the vaccine will be helpful whenever it arrives. But right now, our personal actions that spread H1N1 virus are more significant than ever.

"Until the vaccine gets here we have to make sure we all stick with the basics. Please do not go to work or school if you are exhibiting symptoms of the flu. And keep washing your hands, covering your cough, and doing everything you can to help slow the spread of H1N1," says Dr. Kohn.

For more information on H1N1 flu and vaccines, call the Oregon Public Health Flu Hotline at 1-800-978-3040 or visit www.flu.oregon.gov.

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