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H1N1 Vaccine approved by Federal Drug Administration

Today the U.S. Food and Drug Administration, after rigorous testing, approved a new vaccine to protect against H1N1 pandemic influenza. Under current timelines, the vaccine is expected to be available throughout Oregon in October.

“As soon as the vaccine is received in Oregon it will be distributed to clinics in every corner of the state,” says Dr. Mel Kohn, Oregon Public Health Director. Once the H1N1 vaccine arrives in Oregon, public health officials are urging the priority groups to get vaccinated right away.

“In other parts of the world we have seen three or four times more illness from the H1N1 flu compared to the seasonal flu. We expect increased numbers of ill people from this flu here in Oregon also,” Kohn said.

The priority groups that should get their H1N1 flu shot as soon as possible:

- Anyone six months to 24 years old
- Pregnant women
- People caring for or living with infants under six months of age
- People aged 25 to 64 with medical conditions such as asthma, immune deficiencies, etc.
- Health care workers

The H1N1 vaccine will be given as a shot or a nasal spray. It may require only one vaccine application for an adult. For children it is expected to be one initial shot and a booster about four weeks later, but this is still being reviewed by the FDA.

While the H1N1 vaccine is a new vaccine and won't be available until next month, the seasonal flu vaccine is available now. For information about where to get a

seasonal flu shot please go to the American Lung Association Web site at: www.flucliniclocator.org/ or call Oregon SafeNet at 1-800-723-3638.

So far in Oregon, 12 people have died due to H1N1 influenza-caused illness and 118 have been hospitalized. Unlike the seasonal flu, this new influenza has stayed active through the summer.

In addition, public health experts continue to advise the public to take basic precautions to help slow the spread of all influenza:

- Wash your hands
- Cover your cough
- Stay home if you are sick

Information is being updated daily concerning the H1N1 pandemic flu. Please visit the Oregon Department of Human Services Web site for information about the flu www.flu.oregon.gov/.