

American Ambulance Association H1N1 UPDATE

October 9, 2009

H1N1 Vaccinations for Fire and EMS

In the [2 October Media Advisory](#), the Federal Emergency Management Agency and U.S. Fire Administration recommended that firefighters who provide emergency medical services, emergency medical technicians, and paramedics receive the H1N1 vaccination as soon as it becomes available in their local jurisdiction.

The [Emergency Management and Response—Information Sharing and Analysis Center](#) (EMR-ISAC) noted the words of U.S. Fire Administrator Kelvin J. Cochran: "Given that firefighters and EMS personnel who provide direct patient care are eligible for early vaccination, their first responder agencies should be contacting their local doctors offices, clinics, local health department or other agencies to make arrangements now for their workforces to be vaccinated as soon as supplies of the H1N1 vaccine are received in their jurisdictions."

The National EMS Advisory Council (NEMSAC), in its 30 September Position Statement, asserted that the personal safety of EMS responders in the United States is paramount in a pandemic flu outbreak. Therefore, the Council promotes vaccination of EMS providers for both seasonal and H1N1 influenza, and also www.flu.gov as a credible source of current information regarding pandemic flu.

The EMR-ISAC offers the following web sites for additional H1N1 influenza information: www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu and www.usfa.dhs.gov.

Key Flu Indicators

Each week CDC analyzes information about influenza disease activity in the United States and publishes findings of key flu indicators in a report called [FluView](#). During the week of September 20-26, 2009, a review of the key indicators found that influenza activity remained elevated in the United States. Below is a summary of the most recent key indicators:

- [Visits to doctors](#) for influenza-like illness (ILI) continued to increase in some areas of the country, and overall, are higher than levels expected for this time of the year.
- Total influenza [hospitalization](#) rates for laboratory-confirmed influenza are higher than expected for this time of year for adults and children. And for children 5-17 and adults 18-49 years of age, hospitalization rates from April – September 2009 exceed average flu season rates (for October through April).
- The proportion of [deaths](#) attributed to pneumonia and influenza (P&I) based on the 122 Cities Report was low and within the bounds of what is expected at this time of year. However, 60 pediatric deaths related to 2009 H1N1 flu have been reported to CDC since April 2009, including 11 deaths reported this week.
- Twenty-seven states are reporting [widespread influenza activity](#) at this time. They are: Alabama, Alaska, Arizona, Arkansas, California, Colorado, Delaware, Florida, Georgia, Illinois, Indiana, Kansas, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maryland, Minnesota, Mississippi, New Mexico, North Carolina, Ohio, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania, Texas, Tennessee, Virginia, Washington, and Wyoming. Any reports of widespread influenza activity in September are very unusual.
- Almost all of the influenza [viruses](#) identified so far are 2009 H1N1 influenza A viruses. These viruses remain similar to the virus chosen for the 2009 H1N1 vaccine, and remain susceptible to the antiviral drugs oseltamivir and zanamivir with rare exception.