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SUBJECT

Available Resources: 2009 Novel Influenza Virus A (H1N1)

BY

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Office of Medical Assistance Programs

PURPOSE:

The purpose of this bulletin is to provide resource information on the 2009 Novel Influenza A (H1N1) Virus.

SCOPE:

This bulletin applies to all providers enrolled in the Medical Assistance (MA) Program who administer vaccines to MA recipients in the Fee-For-Service (including ACCESS Plus) and managed care delivery systems.

BACKGROUND/DISCUSSION:

In late April 2009, the World Health Organization (WHO) announced the emergence of a new novel influenza A virus identified as the H1N1 strain; a strain which had not circulated previously in humans. On June 11, 2009, the WHO declared a worldwide H1N1 Influenza Pandemic. In the announcement, WHO made note of the characteristic feature of pandemics to spread rapidly to all parts of the world and advised that countries where outbreaks appear to have peaked, should prepare for a second wave of infection.

Since the emergence of the H1N1 influenza virus strain and announcement of the 2009 Influenza Pandemic, providers have had questions regarding Pennsylvania's Pandemic Preparedness Plan, availability of resources and the most current information on the distribution of vaccines. The following information is intended to assist providers in accessing the most current, valid information on the Novel Influenza A (H1N1) virus and vaccine.

The U.S. Government and other leading authorities have been working closely with vaccine manufacturers to produce an Influenza A (H1N1) vaccine. The Food and Drug Administration recently approved vaccines for the H1N1 virus and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) expects the H1N1 vaccines to be available by late October 2009. The CDC does not expect that there will be a shortage of 2009 Influenza A (H1N1)

COMMENTS AND QUESTIONS REGARDING THIS BULLETIN SHOULD BE DIRECTED TO:

The appropriate toll-free number for your provider type.

Visit the Office of Medical Assistance Programs Web site at www.dpw.state.pa.us/PartnersProviders

vaccine, but availability and demand can be unpredictable.

On July 29, 2009, the CDC announced the following target groups and specific populations of individuals recommended by the CDC Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) to receive the H1N1 vaccine when it first becomes available:

- pregnant women;
- people who live with or care for children under 6 months of age;
- persons 6 months to 24 years of age;
- adults under 65 years with chronic medical conditions or compromised immune systems; and
- healthcare workers and emergency medical services personnel.

The CDC has since released the Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report (MMWR), “*Use of Influenza A (H1N1) 2009 Monovalent Vaccine, Recommendations of the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP), 2009*”, MMWR Volume 58, No. RR-10, as published on August 28, 2009. This MMWR, which includes subsets of target groups during limited vaccine availability, is available online at:

<http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/rr5810a1.htm>.

The U.S. Government plans to supply States with the 2009 Influenza A (H1N1) vaccines, along with items such as needles, syringes, sharps containers, and alcohol swabs, at no cost. The Pennsylvania Department of Health (PA DOH), Division of Immunizations (including the Vaccines for Children (VFC) Program) is currently working with the CDC and leading authorities on program implementation and vaccine distribution. The vaccines are not anticipated to be added to the list of vaccines recommended by the CDC ACIP for Pennsylvania’s VFC Program because of special funding made available from the U.S. Government for the H1N1 vaccine. Additionally, the Department will not be adding the H1N1 vaccine to the MA Fee Schedule as the vaccine will be available to providers at no cost. The Department will, however, allow MA providers who administer vaccines to bill for the administration of the H1N1 vaccine to MA recipients. An MA bulletin will be issued in the near future advising MA providers of billing procedure related to the administration of the H1N1 vaccine.

PROCEDURE:

Several resources are available to assist providers in educating themselves and their staff about the 2009 H1N1 influenza activity and in remaining up to date on clinical and public health guidance, including frequently asked questions and the latest recommendations for

patient management and treatment guidance. Providers may refer to the following resources for additional information:

Clinical and public health guidance on the H1N1 flu may be found on the CDC's website, "2009 H1N1 Flu (Swine Flu)", online at <http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/>.

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services has created a new website dedicated as a one-stop access to U.S. Government H1N1, avian and pandemic influenza information. This website may be found online at: <http://www.flu.gov/>.

The Pennsylvania DOH created a website to address concerns regarding the Novel Influenza A (H1N1) virus. Health guidance and access to toolkits may be found online at: <http://www.dsf.health.state.pa.us/health/cwp/view.asp?q=252990>.

The Pennsylvania DOH is offering State-wide pre-registration for those providers interested in ordering and administering the H1N1 vaccines. Pre-registration and additional information is available to health care providers, pharmacists, schools and other potential vaccinators through the Pennsylvania Statewide Immunization Information System (PA SIIS) website found online at: <http://www.dsf.health.state.pa.us/health/cwp/view.asp?a=175&Q=242182>.

CONTACT INFORMATION

Providers may contact the following organizations for additional information on the 2009 H1N1 Influenza situation and for Public Health and Pandemic Preparedness:

Pennsylvania Emergency Management Agency, Pennsylvania Pandemic Preparedness
2605 Interstate Drive
Harrisburg, PA 17110-9364
(717) 651-2001
<http://www.pema.state.pa.us>

The Pennsylvania Department of Health, Office of Public Health Preparedness:
<http://www.dsf.health.state.pa.us/health/cwp/view.asp?a=333&q=247208>

Questions regarding the pre-registration available through PA SIIS may be referred to:
pasiis@state.pa.us

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
1600 Clifton Road
Atlanta, GA 30333, U.S.A
Public Inquiries: 1-800-CDC-INFO (232-4636)
1-888-232-6348 (TTY)
cdcinfo@cdc.gov
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