

News Release

HSS announces H1N1 & Seasonal Influenza vaccine roll-out

IQALUIT, Nunavut (October 22, 2009) – Nunavut has begun immediate roll-out of its 2009 flu vaccine program following yesterday's announcement by Health Canada authorizing the use of the H1N1 vaccine.

"The roll-out began yesterday with the orientation of each community's health staff. The orientation of the Flu Vaccine Teams will take place next week," said Dr. Isaac Sobol, Nunavut's Chief Medical Officer of Health. "Following orientation, five Flu Vaccine Teams, each comprised of three nurses, will travel simultaneously to regions, visiting all communities that require additional staff to administer the vaccine. They will join forces with local health centre staff in each hamlet to run the mass vaccination clinics, which will begin November 1, 2009."

The vaccine is now here in Nunavut and is being repackaged for shipment with the Flu Vaccine Teams when they visit each community.

Once the community flu vaccine clinic schedule is finalized next week, the list of clinics will be posted on Nunavut's H1N1 flu website www.fluNU.ca and local health centres will have clinic locations, dates and times posted throughout each community.

The federal announcement has provided clear guidelines regarding the safety and use of the H1N1 vaccine, along with the research-based recommendation that the seasonal flu vaccine can be administered at the same time.

"Nunavut had originally deferred the administration of the seasonal flu vaccine in Nunavut until we had evidence that this year's vaccine was effective against the flu strains circulating in Canada. That evidence is now available. By administering both H1N1 vaccine and the seasonal flu vaccine to Nunavummiut at the same time, we have the opportunity to provide protection against all expected flu viruses this year," explained Sobol.

National recommendations from Health Canada on the use of the H1N1 flu vaccine have been developed based on the latest scientific evidence, including clinical trial results.

Who gets the vaccine & where:

Community flu vaccine clinics

Mass flu vaccine clinics will take place in public buildings in most communities as it is the most efficient and effective way of vaccinating the most people in the safest way and shortest time. These clinics will be advertised in each community using posters, community radio and cable television notices.

0 – 5 months: H1N1 and seasonal flu vaccine are not authorized for use in this age group

6 months to 9 years: First H1N1 dose and seasonal flu vaccine.

10 years and up (including 65+ years): One H1N1 dose and seasonal flu vaccine.

Community Health Centre:

6 months to 9 years: Second H1N1 dose and, for those not previously vaccinated, a second seasonal flu vaccine. Individuals will be advised at the community flu vaccine clinics when to go

to health centre for second doses.

Pregnant Women*: One dose of H1N1 vaccine for pregnant women and the seasonal flu vaccine.

* The vaccine for pregnant women will be given as soon as it is authorized and delivered to communities. It is recommended that if rates of H1N1 flu are high or increasing and the vaccine for pregnant women is not yet available, women more than 20 weeks pregnant should be offered the regular vaccine.

As a reminder to all Nunavummiut:

- Get your H1N1 and seasonal flu shot to stay healthy this flu season.
- Cover your coughs and sneezes with your sleeve or a tissue and throw the tissue away.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water. An alcohol-based hand sanitizer is also effective.
- Stay home if you are sick for seven days after you start getting sick, or at least 24 hours after you are not feeling sick anymore and call your health centre immediately if you are pregnant, have a chronic health condition or your symptoms worsen.

"We know we can lessen the impact of the H1N1 flu if Nunavummiut take these precautions," said Dr. Sobol.

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