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FIRST DOSES OF PANDEMIC H1N1 INFLUENZA VACCINE TO ARRIVE

BUTTE COUNTY, Calif. — Many Butte County pediatricians and children’s health clinics will soon receive their first allocations of pandemic H1N1 vaccine, according to Butte County Public Health Department. Approximately 2,300 doses of Live Attenuated Influenza Vaccine (LAIV), a nasal spray vaccine, have been allocated to Butte County at this time.

“This initial allocation of vaccine will be prioritized for children, especially children under 10 years old”, stated Mark Lundberg, M.D., Health Officer for Butte County. “Children are at higher risk for coming down with pandemic H1N1 flu, and children under 10 years old will need 2 doses of vaccine to be protected. So the idea is to get these doses out to those kids first”.

LAIV is currently licensed for healthy persons 2 - 49 years of age. The intranasal vaccine uses a live, but weakened virus, and is only intended for healthy individuals without underlying health conditions. The vaccine was developed in the same way, and is expected to have a similar safety profile, as seasonal flu vaccines, which have very good safety track records. Parents who want to get their child vaccinated should contact their child’s health care provider.

More vaccine is expected to arrive in the coming weeks, and will include an injectable version (“flu shot”) that uses an inactivated or “killed” virus. As more vaccine arrives more providers and clinics will be able to offer it. Vaccine will initially be prioritized for five target groups who are at high risk for complications of the flu:

- pregnant women
- people who live with or care for children younger than 6 months
- healthcare workers
- persons between the ages of 6 months – 24 years
- people from ages 25-64 who have chronic health disorders that put them at high risk for complications of the flu

People over the age of 65 are not prioritized for pandemic H1N1 vaccine because very few people in that age group have come

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down with the new flu. It is thought that older people may have some partial immunity to this virus.

People can take many other actions to help prevent the spread of flu, including:

- ✓ Cough and sneeze into a tissue or into your elbow. Throw tissue in the trash.
- ✓ Wash your hands often with soap and water. Use alcohol-based hand sanitizer when soap and water are not available.
- ✓ Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth. Germs spread this way.
- ✓ Avoid close contact with sick people.
- ✓ If you are sick, stay home until you have been without a fever for 24 hours.

As more information on pandemic H1N1 vaccine becomes available it will be posted on the Butte County Public Health website at www.buttecounty.net/publichealth and on our toll-free flu information line at 1-866-444-2405.

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Butte County Public Health Department

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