

Pandemic (H1N1) 2009 Influenza Update

Report to the Marin County Board of Supervisors
Fred Schwartz, M.D., Public Health Officer
Marin Health and Human Services
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Pandemic (H1N1) 2009 Influenza A was first reported in April, 2009, as “swine flu”, and declared a pandemic by the World Health Organization (WHO) on June 11, 2009. The virus established an early flu season in California and much of the U.S., where it has been the predominant circulating strain, and has spread worldwide.

Implications for the 2009-2010 Flu Season

- So far, worldwide, most 2009 H1N1 illnesses have been mild; overall not more severe than seasonal flu.
- Children and younger adults particularly impacted.
- Pregnancy and underlying chronic medical conditions are risk factors for complications and more severe illness.
- Influenza season usually runs from October-April and peaks in December-February, with 36,000 deaths and over 200,000 hospitalizations nationwide.
- The addition of the pandemic H1N1 strain to the usual seasonal strains could potentially result in more illnesses, hospitalizations, and deaths than typically experienced. If the novel strain mutates and becomes more virulent, these impacts could worsen.
- While the duration and severity of this year’s flu season are uncertain, impacts are likely to be felt at healthcare facilities, schools, businesses and communities throughout the county.

Influenza Disease Activity

- Flu activity is increasing in US; 26 states, including CA, have widespread activity, unusual for this time of year.
- Predominant flu virus in both US and world is still H1N1.
- Marin: Total of 31 hospitalized through 9/23/09
 - Median age 39
 - 4 deaths, all with underlying medical conditions
 - 8 cases (26%) requiring ICU
 - 5 cases (16%) pregnant
 - No hospitalizations 8/23-9/17; one since then
- 9/13-9/19: After 6 weeks of decreasing visits for influenza like illness (ILI), Marin Emergency Department ILI visits increased from less than 2% to 3.1%.
- Southern Hemisphere Flu Season 5/09-8/09
 - 6-7 weeks of increasing activity followed by fairly rapid decline
 - H1N1 virus strains similar to those detected in the US
 - At-risk populations similar to those observed in the US
 - Health care systems experienced stress, but it was generally geographically isolated and relatively short lived

Planning and Response

- In Marin County, and throughout the Bay Area, we have been actively planning for pandemic influenza for several years.
- These plans provided the basis for our response to the novel H1N1 swine flu event last Spring.
- Marin HHS is actively engaged with planning partners in efforts to reduce the impacts of H1N1 and seasonal flu in 2009-2010:
 - County departments and officials: CAO, Sheriff's Office of Emergency Services, DPW. Supervisor Adams has been particularly engaged and we thank her for her leadership.
 - Hospitals, community clinics, healthcare providers
 - Marin County Office of Education and Schools
 - Community based organizations
 - Local cities and towns
- The Public Health Division of HHS has established planning and response teams
 - Vaccination and Antiviral Distribution
 - Public Information and Outreach
 - Screening and Triage
 - Training

Vaccination

This year, separate vaccinations for seasonal flu, and H1N1 flu.

- Seasonal flu vaccination
 - Available through healthcare providers, pharmacies and other locations
 - Protects against seasonal flu, but not H1N1 flu.
 - CDC recommended groups for seasonal flu vaccination:
 - Children and adolescents 6 months—18 years
 - Household and other close contacts (e.g., daycare providers) of children aged less than 6 months.
 - Adults aged 50 and older
 - Women who will be pregnant during flu season
 - Persons with chronic medical conditions
 - Residents of long term care facilities
 - Health care personnel
 - Household contacts and caregivers of children aged less than 5 years (especially less than 6 months), and adults aged 50 years and older
 - Household contacts and caregivers of persons with medical conditions that put them at higher risk for severe complications of influenza
 - Any adult who wants to reduce the risk of becoming ill with flu or transmitting it to others
- H1N1 Vaccination
 - The FDA has approved H1N1 vaccines for use in people > 6 months of age.

- Information re number of doses required pending completion of clinical trials.
- Should begin availability in mid-October, with shipments continuing through the end of December
- CDC priority groups for H1N1 vaccination:
 - pregnant women
 - persons who live with or provide care for infants aged <6 months
 - health-care and emergency medical services personnel
 - children and young adults aged 6 months–24 years
 - persons aged 25–64 years who have medical conditions that put them at higher risk for influenza-related complications
 - Est. 148,000 or 57% of Marin population
- Vaccine will be provided at physician offices, community clinics, pharmacies, and at least four special clinics being planned by Marin HHS. If necessary, vaccinations may also be provided at schools.

Antiviral Treatment

- Oseltamivir (Tamiflu) capsules or Zanamivir (Relenza), inhaled powder.
- CDC treatment guidelines: The priority use for antiviral drugs this season is to treat people who are very sick (hospitalized) or people who are sick with flu-like symptoms and who are at increased risk of serious flu complications, such as pregnant women, very young children (<5yo), people 65 and older, and people with chronic health conditions.
- Most people with flu do not need to be treated with antiviral medications.
- Resistance to oseltamivir remains low
 - 21 of >10,000 samples tested, with 10 of those resistant samples in US

Measures We Can All Take to Reduce the Spread of Seasonal and H1N1 Influenza

- Get vaccinated
- Take everyday preventive actions:
 - Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze. Throw the tissue in the trash after you use it.
 - Wash your hands often with soap and water. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand rub.
 - Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth. Germs spread this way.
 - Try to avoid close contact with sick people.
 - If you or your child are sick with flu-like illness, stay home until at least 24 hours after your fever is gone (without the use of a fever reducing medication), except to get medical care, or other necessities.
 - While sick, limit contact with others to keep from infecting them.
- Plan now for how you will care for family members sick with flu.
- Employers and employees should anticipate absences from work or school due to influenza illness.

For more information and updates, visit www.marinflu.org