

Ulster County Weekly H1N1 Update - Summary Released: 20 –Nov. 09

- This Monday was Dr. Hasbrouck's first day as Public Health Director of the Ulster County Health Department.
- He plans to hold a town-hall style meeting in the next few weeks to learn more about the county's needs and discuss the county's plan to address the H1N1 challenges.
- The overall level of influenza-like illness (ILI) reported by health care providers in Ulster County remains constant but has not increased when compared to last week.
- Emergency Departments have reported a slight decline in visits since last week due to ILI.
- While most people with ILI or flu in Ulster County are experiencing mild to moderate illness, a small number of those hospitalized in Ulster County are experiencing more severe illness or complications caused by the flu.
- Schools have reported lower rates of absenteeism this week.
- In previous pandemics there have been waves of illness making the timing, spread and severity of influenza unpredictable. Outbreaks may occur in waves at different places at different times.
- Seasonal and H1N1 flu vaccine from UCHD is currently unavailable. Your own Health Care Provider (HCP) may be the best option for getting vaccinated at this time.
- The H1N1 vaccine supplies among HCPs are increasing although we are still not where we want to be.
- By mid-December, the UCHD anticipates having enough H1N1 vaccine to hold public clinics to complement the vaccination being done by HCPs. When enough supply becomes available the schedule and locations will be released. Please be patient. It's never too late to get vaccinated!
- Increases in pneumococcal disease, a bacterial infection, were seen during all three of the flu pandemics that occurred in the twentieth century. A key difference is that now we have two pneumococcal vaccines that may help to prevent these infections. Talk to your HCP about which pneumonia vaccine is right for you and your family.

For additional information about H1N1 and updates, visit our website at: www.UlsterCountyNY.gov/health or call seasonal flu hotline: 340-3093. Also visit <http://www.flucliniclocator.org/> to see if there are any flu vaccine clinics scheduled at retail outlets near you or call NYS DOH Hotline 1-800-808-1987.

**Ulster County Health Department
Seasonal and H1N1 Influenza Advisory
Update 11/20/09**

Introducing La Mar Hasbrouck, M.D., M.P.H.:

This Monday was Dr. Hasbrouck's first day as Public Health Director of the Ulster County Health Department. He plans to hold a town-hall style meeting in the next few weeks to learn more about the county's needs and discuss the county's plan to address the H1N1 challenges.

Influenza Monitoring:

The overall level of influenza-like illness (ILI) reported by health care providers in Ulster County remains constant but has not increased when compared to last week. Emergency Departments have reported a slight decline in visits since last week due to ILI. While most people with ILI or flu in Ulster County are experiencing mild to moderate illness, a small number of those hospitalized in Ulster County are experiencing more severe illness or complications caused by the flu. Schools have reported lower rates of absenteeism this week. In previous pandemics there have been waves of illness making the timing, spread and severity of influenza unpredictable. Outbreaks may occur in waves at different places at different times. Ulster County Health Department (UCHD) is continuing to monitor influenza activity on a daily basis.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) almost all of the influenza viruses identified so far this season have been 2009 H1N1 influenza A viruses. Forty-six states, including New York State, are reporting widespread influenza activity; a decline of two states since last week.

Status of Prevention Efforts:

Flu Vaccination Information:

Seasonal and H1N1 flu vaccine from UCHD is currently unavailable. Your own Health Care Provider (HCP) may be the best option for getting vaccinated at this time. The H1N1 vaccine supplies among HCPs are increasing although we are still not where we want to be. Larger amounts of H1N1 vaccine are anticipated to be released in December and it will become more readily accessible for those individuals who want to be vaccinated.

By mid-December, the UCHD anticipates having enough H1N1 vaccine to hold public clinics to complement the vaccination being done by HCPs. When enough supply becomes available the schedule and locations will be released. Please be patient. It's never too late to get vaccinated!

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If your provider has not ordered H1N1 vaccine, and does not plan to order H1N1 vaccine, call the Ulster County Health Department Flu Hotline at 845-340-3093 or log onto www.UlsterCountyNY.gov/health to get updated information about when vaccination clinics for the general public will be held.

You can also check <http://www.flucliniclocator.org/> to see if there are any flu vaccine clinics scheduled at pharmacies and retail outlets near you.

In addition, the New York State Department of Health has developed the *Flu Vaccination Clinics in New York State webpage*, where the public can click on a county and find more information about where to get seasonal and H1N1 vaccinations. The site is: http://www.nyhealth.gov/diseases/communicable/influenza/vaccination_clinics/

Pneumococcal Illness and Vaccine:

Increases in pneumococcal disease, a bacterial infection, were seen during all three of the flu pandemics that occurred in the twentieth century. A key difference is that now we have two pneumococcal vaccines that may help to prevent these infections. Talk to your HCP about which pneumonia vaccine is right for you and your family.

- All children less than 5 years of age should receive the pneumococcal conjugate vaccine (PCV7).
- In addition, the 23-valent pneumococcal polysaccharide vaccine (PPSV) should be administered to all persons 2-64 years of age with high risk conditions and everyone 65 years and older.

Public Information: For Students and Parents:

This season we have seen that some people in Ulster County Schools have been sick with the flu. Treatment for the H1N1 flu is the same as for seasonal flu. Rest, fluids and medicine to reduce body aches and fever, are all that most of us need to recover. For people with certain underlying medical conditions, such as those with asthma and other chronic diseases, flu can be more serious, and these individuals should contact their HCP.

Sick kids should stay home! They should NOT go to school, work, or out in public. If you think you have the flu, you should stay home and away from others. Individuals with flu-like symptoms should remain home for at least 24 hours after fever has disappeared (without the use of fever-reducing medication).

The H1N1 flu outbreak that first occurred in the spring of 2009 taught us that closing schools does not reduce the spread of the H1N1 flu. This flu moves too fast. That's why federal, state and local officials no longer recommend school closures due to the flu except in special circumstances. For example, some schools might close because of high student, faculty or staff absenteeism. Your family should plan what they will do if school is closed for a time.

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Parents can help protect their children and reduce the spread of seasonal or H1N1 Influenza by taking the following precautions:

- Teach your children to wash hands frequently with soap and water for 20 seconds (about as long as it takes to sing the "Happy Birthday" song twice). Be sure to set a good example by doing this yourself.
- Teach your children the proper use of hand sanitizer. Gels, rubs, and hand wipes all work well, as long as they contain at least 60% alcohol. Hand wipes must be disposed of properly. Always read and follow label instructions when using hand sanitizer.
- Teach your children to cover coughs and sneezes with tissues or by coughing into the inside of the elbow.
- Teach your children to dispose of used tissues properly and promptly after use.
- Teach your children to stay away from people who are sick.

More information about the flu is available at www.nyhealth.gov and www.flu.gov.