



# COUNTY OF KENOSHA

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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## **Health Department Prepares for Distribution of H1N1 Vaccine**

Kenosha – October 1, 2009 – The Kenosha County Health Department is preparing for the distribution of the H1N1 (formerly know as swine) flu vaccine. The Department is working in collaboration with a wide range of local healthcare providers to provide the vaccine at clinics and healthcare facilities throughout the county.

“We estimate that 100,000 Kenosha County residents are in the target groups to receive this vaccine when it first arrives,” said Frank Matteo, the Kenosha County Health Department Director/Health Officer. “Many healthcare providers have already signed up to provide vaccine to their patients, but we are still looking for more to join this collaborative effort.”

The Health Department is planning to deploy several short-term and long-term H1N1 vaccination clinics. The dates for these clinics will be determined based on the vaccine delivery dates, but the target dates are mid to late October. Its goal is to provide vaccinations to approximately 30,000 residents. Residents may also receive vaccinations from health care providers, pharmacies and other local facilities.

“We know that children are at a relatively greater risk of becoming seriously ill with the H1N1 flu strain if they get it, so we are particularly encouraging parents to get their children vaccinated through their health care providers,” said Matteo.

The target groups for the H1N1 vaccine are individuals 6 months to 24 years of age; caretakers and household contacts of children under 6 months of age; all pregnant women; healthcare and emergency medical services employees and people 25 to 64 years of age with underlying medical conditions, such as asthma or diabetes, that put them at high risk for flu-related complications. While vaccine will be available first to those in these target groups, it is expected that there will be enough vaccine over time to accommodate anyone who wants the vaccine.

“Senior citizens are normally first in line to receive the seasonal flu shot, but they are not among the current target groups for the H1N1 vaccine,” said Matteo. “We know that they are not as likely to become ill from H1N1 flu as other groups. Senior citizens should get the seasonal flu shot now and get the H1N1 vaccine as soon as the high priority groups are immunized.”

The first confirmed case of H1N1 flu in Wisconsin was reported in late April. Thousands of cases of H1N1 flu followed and, for a period of time, the state reported the highest number of cases in the U.S. The virus was so prolific in its spread worldwide that by June the World Health Organization

signaled that a global pandemic was underway. While it is not possible to accurately predict what may occur during the upcoming flu season, many scientists believe a second, more aggressive wave of H1N1 flu will strike the U.S.

“Vaccination is the best way to protect yourself and your family against this illness,” said Matteo. “The H1N1 vaccine is being produced the same way as the seasonal flu vaccine. We believe it is one of the safest vaccines available.”

The Health Department is encouraging residents to follow steps to help prevent the spread of flu (both seasonal and H1N1) in the workplace, schools and throughout the community. In addition to receiving the H1N1 vaccine, the following are some simple but highly important steps individuals can do:

- Wash your hands **frequently**
- Stay home if you are sick
- Cover your cough and sneeze

People with flu-like symptoms should stay home from school, work and social gatherings until 24 hours after resolution of their fever. People are more contagious when they have a fever, so staying home during this time is especially important to not spread the flu to coworkers, friends or fellow students.

As misinformation is already circulating about H1N1, the Health Department encourages residents to access reliable sources for information and updates such as the following web sites:

<http://www.co.kenosha.wi.us/dhs/Divisions/Health/>  
<http://pandemic.wisconsin.gov>  
<http://www.flu.gov/>

Or call the Health Department directly at (262) 605-6700 or (800) 472-8008.

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