



WEST VIRGINIA BUREAU FOR PUBLIC HEALTH



HEALTH ADVISORY # 1

## WEST VIRGINIA FLU VACCINE INTERIM GUIDELINES GIVEN LIMITED SUPPLY

**TO: West Virginia Local Health Departments, Physicians, Hospitals, Health Care Professional Organization and Societies and Other Health Care Professionals**

**FROM: Cathy Slemp, M.D., M.P.H., Acting State Health Officer, West Virginia Department of Health and Human Resources, Bureau for Public Health**

**DATE: 12:00 PM, OCTOBER 8, 2004**

**LOCAL HEALTH DEPARTMENTS: PLEASE DISTRIBUTE TO COMMUNITY VACCINE PROVIDERS AND OTHER APPLICABLE PARTNERS**

**OTHER RECIPIENTS: PLEASE DISTRIBUTE AS NEEDED.**

Earlier this week, Chiron Corporation announced that it would be unable to distribute its flu vaccine (Fluvirin) in the United States for the 2004-05 influenza season. Chiron product was approximately half the flu vaccine supply for the US this season. As a result, flu vaccine supplies are expected to be extremely limited. Current estimates are that West Virginia, like the rest of the country, will have only half of its anticipated flu vaccine.

This is clearly a serious and difficult situation. The WV Bureau for Public Health urges all flu vaccine providers to follow the CDC Interim Recommendations developed regarding this issue. **Please note, that for the first time, public health officials in WV and nationally are actively recommending that people who are not in a high risk group not be vaccinated at present. Instead, most healthy people age 2 to 64 (unless close contacts of high risk groups) should be asked to defer vaccine and to practice other methods of disease prevention.**

### **ACTION STEPS:**

Vaccine providers are asked to closely target available vaccine to the following high risk groups. These groups of people are more likely to become seriously ill as a result of the flu or are close contacts of those at risk of serious illness. Current target groups for vaccine are considered to be of equal importance and include:

- All children aged 6-23 months
- Adults aged 65 years and older
- Persons aged 2-64 years with underlying chronic medical conditions
- All women who will be pregnant during the influenza season

- Residents of nursing homes and long-term care facilities
- Children aged 6 months to 18 years on chronic aspirin therapy
- Health-care workers involved in direct patient care; and
- Out-of-home caregivers and household contacts of children aged <6 months

Many children aged <9 years require two doses of vaccine if they have not previously been vaccinated. All children at high risk of complications from influenza, including those aged 6–23 months, who present for vaccination should be vaccinated with a first or second dose, depending on vaccination status. However, doses should not be held in reserve to ensure that two doses will be available. Rather, available vaccine should be used to vaccinate persons in priority groups on a first come first serve basis.

Healthy persons who are 5-49 years of age and not pregnant, including health-care workers (except those who care for severely immunocompromised patients in special care units) and persons caring for children aged <6 months should be encouraged to be vaccinated with intranasally administered live, attenuated influenza vaccine, where available.

Vaccine Availability Tracking: Local Health Departments will be tracking the location of vaccine in each county this season so that high risk individuals can be linked to available vaccine (assuring full use of limited resources). To perform this community service, they will need information regarding your office or agency's current vaccine supply and your willingness to accept referrals. LHDs will be asking you to provide this information weekly via a fax back form. WVBPH urges all providers to respond with this basic information each week for as long as supplies last.

Other Resources for Disease Prevention: Other critical methods to prevent spread of influenza include respiratory hygiene, good hand washing, staying home when ill, etc. Patient information on these and other activities can be found on the CDC website at <http://www.cdc.gov/flu/protect/preventing.htm> (see [http://www.cdc.gov/germstopper/home\\_work\\_school.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/germstopper/home_work_school.htm))

Educational materials for patients are available for downloading from [www.wvdhhr.org/immunizations/](http://www.wvdhhr.org/immunizations/). For more information, call the WV Immunization Program at 304-558-2188 or toll-free at 1-800-642-3634.

Influenza Virus Surveillance in WV: Beginning soon, WV and national influenza surveillance data will be updated weekly on the WV Bureau for Public Health's Influenza Surveillance website: [http://www.wvdhhr.org/idep/flu\\_surv.htm](http://www.wvdhhr.org/idep/flu_surv.htm). At present, influenza has not been identified in West Virginia.

For more information, please contact your local health department or the West Virginia Immunization Program at 304/558-2188, toll-free: 1-800-642-3634.

**##This Message was distributed to Local Health Departments, Professional Societies (e.g., APIC, AAP, AAFP, ACP, WVHA), WVDHHR**

**Disaster Network and Health Care Providers via WVMI##**

**Categories of Health Alert messages:**

**Health Alert:** Conveys the highest level of importance; warrants immediate action or attention.

**Health Advisory:** Provides important information for a specific incident or situation; may not require immediate action.

**Health Update:** Provides updated information regarding an incident or situation; unlikely to require immediate action.