



WEST VIRGINIA BUREAU FOR PUBLIC HEALTH



HEALTH ADVISORY (#4)

## FLU VACCINE UPDATE

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

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

**DATE: DECEMBER 14, 2004**

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

**OTHER RECIPIENTS:** PLEASE DISTRIBUTE TO ASSOCIATION MEMBERS, STAFF, ETC.

This advisory is aimed at updating private providers and facilities of the state's flu vaccine allocation. It also requests your assistance in assuring vaccine soon to arrive in your community is fully used to reach at risk target populations. Providers are asked to continue promotion of flu vaccine through January and as long as supplies last this season.

### UPDATE

Working through their local health department, many private providers and facilities employing and serving target populations have now placed additional flu vaccine orders. Providers who will be receiving vaccine should be contacted directly by distributors. Small orders will mostly be filled in December. Larger orders have been split between vaccine available in December and vaccine that will become available nationally in January.

WV still has high-risk individuals seeking vaccination.

### NEEDED ACTION

**Keep Vaccinating throughout the Influenza Season:** Continue to administer vaccine through January and beyond. Although early vaccine administration is preferable, it is never too late in the flu season to vaccinate! Typically in West Virginia, flu begins in December, peaks in January-February and tapers off by mid March to early April.

**Help maximize full use of vaccine within your community:** If you can accept referrals from the community, please notify your local health department. If you have remaining vaccine after

vaccinating 2004-05 priority groups within your facility or practice, also notify your local health department so that your supply can be sold at cost or donated (at the discretion of the provider with vaccine) to another entity in need.

**Continue to Use 2004-05 Priority Guidelines:** Vaccine should still be used only for priority groups per the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices Guidance, October 5, 2004:

- 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 influenza season
- Residents of nursing homes and long-term care facilities
- Children 6 months-18 years of age on chronic aspirin therapy
- Health-care workers with direct patient care
- Out-of-home caregivers and household contacts of children aged <6 months.

December vs. January vaccine: Given knowledge of individual patient medical conditions, health care providers are in the best position to prioritize within the priority groupings, keeping in mind that those at highest risk are individuals who have both a high likelihood of complications and a high likelihood of coming in contact with influenza virus. Health care workers providing direct patient care to high risk individuals are also good candidates for December vaccination.

## **OTHER UPDATES**

**Flu Activity in West Virginia:** To date, two cases of confirmed influenza have been identified in WV. Surveillance data is updated weekly on the WVDHHR website at <http://www.wvdhhr.org/IDEP/a-z/a-z-influenza.asp>,

**Antivirals:** 2004-05 Guidelines on antiviral use can be found at [www.cdc.gov/flu](http://www.cdc.gov/flu).

**Prevention beyond Vaccine:** Besides vaccine, everyone can take other practical steps to help prevent spread of flu. These include staying home from work, school, and other gatherings when you are sick; covering your mouth and nose when coughing or sneezing; and practicing frequent and thorough hand washing with soap and water or waterless handwashing agents.

For more information about the flu and this year's recommendations, visit the CDC Website: <http://www.cdc.gov/flu> and the WV Immunization Program website at [www.wvdhhr.org/immunizations/](http://www.wvdhhr.org/immunizations/). 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. CDC's flu hotline is 1-800-FLU-INFO.

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