



COUNTY OF SAN DIEGO

NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE PUBLICATION

Dec. 14, 2004

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SAN DIEGO COUNTY RELAXES FLU IMMUNIZATION REQUIREMENTS

Public Health Officer Follows State Order Issued Today

Following a California Department of Health Services order relaxing flu immunization requirements for all California counties, Nancy Bowen, M.D., San Diego County Public Health Officer, will issue an amended public health directive that likewise authorizes changes that allow more adults and children to receive the vaccine.

"This is welcome news for many individuals who, while not initially in the high-risk priority groups, are at risk nonetheless due to their age and because they live with those in the high-risk priority groups," said Dr. Bowen.

The relaxed recommendations now allow adults age 50 or older, emergency service workers, and all who have regular contact with those in high risk priority groups to receive a flu shot. Others recommended to receive vaccine include: all children aged six - 23 months, individuals age two - 64 with underlying chronic medical conditions, women who will be pregnant during influenza season, residents of nursing homes and long-term care facilities, children six months to 18 years of age on chronic aspirin therapy, out-of-home caregivers and household contacts of children younger than six months of age, and healthcare workers providing direct patient care.

The County has received 49,380 adult doses of State-purchased vaccine and has 7,000 doses on hand, and about 4,800 doses of flu vaccine for children remaining. Children vaccine is available only for children eligible for the Vaccines for Children (VFC) program. The County also supplies vaccine to about 30 community health clinics throughout the county; the clinics have about 4,000 adult and child doses on hand.

For information on where to find a County Public Health Clinic, please call the County Flu Hotline, 1 (866) 358-2966. For other clinics, please call the CHIP Flu Line, (877) FLU-0202, or visit the CHIP Web site, www.sdchip.org.

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