



County of San Diego

HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES AGENCY

PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICES

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Community Epidemiology
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TB Control & Refugee Health
Vital Records

December 15, 2009

Dear Obstetric Care Provider:

The 2009 H1N1 and seasonal influenza viruses are a serious threat to the health of pregnant women and their unborn children. Tragically, to date in San Diego County, three pregnant women were hospitalized with complications from H1N1 and subsequently died, either while still pregnant or within two weeks post-partum. Nationwide, pregnant women represent 6% of confirmed 2009 H1N1 influenza deaths in the United States, while only about 1% of the general population is pregnant. Poor outcomes associated with pregnant women who have contracted 2009 H1N1 influenza include early labor, severe pneumonia, hospitalization, and death.

The County of San Diego Health and Human Services Agency joins with the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (ACOG), the American Medical Association (AMA), the American Academy of Family Physicians (AAFP), and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) in urging you to immunize your patients against 2009 H1N1 influenza and seasonal flu as vaccine supplies permit. Supplies of 2009 H1N1 vaccine in San Diego are increasing, with 833,090 doses filled for San Diego County providers through December 11.

A study cited by ACOG has found that seasonal influenza vaccination during pregnancy reduced febrile respiratory illness in mothers and infants and reduced laboratory-confirmed influenza in the infants. As ACOG notes, "There is every reason to believe that the 2009 H1N1 monovalent vaccine will have the same benefits." Because caregivers of newborns are potential 2009 H1N1 transmission sources, vaccination is recommended both for mothers postpartum (who were not already vaccinated during pregnancy) and others who live with or care for infants less than six months of age, who are too young to be vaccinated themselves.

If you have not yet received 2009 H1N1 vaccine for your patients please contact the County of San Diego Immunization Branch (619-692-8661 or info@sdiz.org) to discuss options for obtaining the vaccine for use in your practice setting. The vaccine and ancillary supplies are free.

With your help we can reduce the incidence of and complications from 2009 H1N1 influenza in the very vulnerable populations of pregnant women and young infants. Along with this letter, we have included patient handouts (in English and Spanish) regarding H1N1 for pregnant women. For additional information on 2009 H1N1 influenza in pregnant women and the importance of vaccinating this population see:

- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/clinician_pregnant.htm
- American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists
http://www.acog.org/departments/dept_notice.cfm?recno=20&bulletin=4866

Sincerely,

WILMA J. WOOTEN, M.D., M.P.H.
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