

NEW MEXICO DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH  
Secretary Alfredo Vigil, MD

For immediate release:  
August 25, 2009

Media contact: Deborah Busemeyer  
Office: 505-827-2619, Cell: 470-2290

### **Health Secretary to Providers: Vaccinate Patients as soon as Influenza Vaccine is Available People Need to Get Vaccinated Against Both Seasonal Influenza and H1N1 Influenza**

(Santa Fe) – Health Secretary Alfredo Vigil, MD, today encouraged healthcare providers to provide seasonal influenza vaccine to their patients as soon as vaccine becomes available, which should be next month. The seasonal flu vaccine will not protect people against H1N1 flu, so people will need to get H1N1 vaccine when it is available later this fall or winter.

“Other countries that are in the midst of their influenza season are reporting seasonal strains of flu in addition to H1N1 circulating, so it’s important that people protect themselves against both by getting two different vaccines,” Dr Vigil said. “It’s especially critical for people to get vaccinated as soon as vaccine is available if they are at high risk of developing complications or spreading the disease to those who are vulnerable.”

The Department expects seasonal flu vaccine will be available in September. New Mexicans should contact their health care providers to receive flu vaccine. The Department’s public health offices provide flu vaccine to people who are at high risk for serious illness or death and people who have no health insurance. Public health offices are listed in the phonebook’s blue pages under state government. Contact information for public health offices is listed at [www.nmhealth.org](http://www.nmhealth.org).

This year, the Department of Health ordered about 70,000 doses of adult flu vaccine and 245,000 doses of children’s flu vaccine, which includes 112,500 doses of FluMist, a nasal spray for ages 2 through 18 years. The Department is continuing its school vaccination program that it piloted last year. There are more than 100 schools participating statewide, which could reach 103,000 school-age children. Information about school participation and flu vaccine clinics will be posted on [immunizenm.org](http://immunizenm.org) as clinics are scheduled.

Those who face a higher risk of serious illness, death or exposing others to seasonal flu are encouraged to get vaccinated as soon as vaccines are available. They are:

- Residents and caretakers in long-term care facilities
- Persons with chronic health conditions, such as asthma or other breathing problems, kidney disease, heart disease, diabetes, muscle or nerve disorders that can lead to breathing or swallowing problems, and children on long-term aspirin therapy.
- Children age 6 months through age 18
- Persons ages 50 years and older

- Pregnant women
- Health care workers who provide direct patient care
- Household contacts and out-of-home caregivers of children up to age 5, or anyone at increased risk of flu complications

To avoid catching the flu or passing it on to others, people should frequently wash their hands, cover their mouth and nose when sneezing and coughing and stay home when ill.

Many of the people at high risk for a flu shot should also get a pneumonia shot if they have never had one. People who need to have the pneumococcal vaccine are: age 65 and older, and adults 19 and older who smoke, or have chronic health conditions, such as asthma, diabetes, cardiovascular or lung disease, cirrhosis, chronic renal failure or immunocompromised due to lymphoma, organ transplant, multiple myeloma or Hodgkin disease.

The Department of Health is planning influenza vaccination clinics that will take place this fall or winter to protect people against the novel H1N1 strain of influenza. The Department expects to start receiving H1N1 vaccine in October.

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