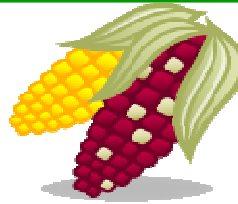




RHC Newsletter



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H1N1 Remains a Top Story Reported by TV Networks & Newspapers

H1N1 is a novel type A influenza virus, also referred to as swine flu, not to be confused with H5N1 avian influenza. Fortunately, the highly virulent avian strain H5N1 has yet to mutate to a virus that is spread human to human; we have NOT had to contend with it in the US.

H1N1, swine flu pandemic was categorized by the World Health Organization as a level 6 not because it is so deadly but because it spread so quickly to many countries. Level 6 is defined as “efficient and sustained human to human transmission.”

Seasonal flu results in the death of 36,000 people each year. While the novel H1N1 is highly contagious, less than 500 deaths have been reported to date. Fortunately vaccines are due most any day. The first wave of H1N1 did not show itself to be highly virulent. We are in the early phase of the second wave, historically shown to be the worst phase. Only time will tell how this pandemic strain will impact us.

This strain appears to most severely affect the young, those with co-morbidities, and obese individuals. The most confirmed and probable cases reported are 5-24 year-olds. The Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices has recommendations for prioritizing groups for the initial distribution of H1N1 vaccine. They are:

- Pregnant women
- Household and caregiver contacts of children younger than 6 months of age
- Health-care and emergency medical services personnel with direct patient contact
- Children and young adults aged 6 months–24 years
- Persons aged 25–64 years who have medical conditions that put them at higher risk for influenza-related complications

Once demand is met for the 5 initial target groups, then all other persons ages 25 through 64 years will receive vaccinations, followed by all persons 65 years and older. Local health departments should be consulted for questions about persons outside the recommendations.

The Pandemic H1N1 Influenza virus is spread from person to person by:

- Coughing
- Sneezing
- Touching something with the virus on it and then touching eyes, nose, or mouth (influenza virus can survive on environmental surfaces up to 2-8 hours)

Vaccines were developed by five manufacturers: CSL, GSK, MedImmune, Novartis, and Sanofi:

- Both inactivated and live intranasal vaccine
- Thimerosal-free vaccine should be available for pregnant women young children
- Storage identical to seasonal vaccine
- Ancillary supplies will be provided: syringes, needles, sharps containers, alcohol swabs

State/Local public health (PH) departments will designate who can serve as a vaccine provider. Call your local health department if interested. (cont. p. 3)

Taking Care of a Sick Person in Your Home

CDC Interim Guidance for 2009 H1N1 Flu (Swine Flu)
http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/guidance_homecare.htm

This site describes:

- Steps to lessen the spread of flu
- Laundry, waste disposal
- Placement of sick person, protection of others in the house
- Recommendations for face masks
- Medications to lessen symptoms of flu
- When to seek emergency medical care, etc.

Teach all family members to cough or sneeze into their sleeve (not hand) or a tissue and then throw it away immediately.

Since germs are spread through touch, sneezes, and coughs, let's skip the hugs, kisses, and handshakes. During the flu season, greet friends, family, and associates with kind words and a smile.

Wash hands or use gel sanitizer after touching door knobs, light switches, phones, dishes, etc. The physical rubbing of the hands together is important too. Aim for 20 seconds.

Wash dishes in the dishwasher or use disposable ones.

Take care not to carry bed clothes close to chest or face, and dry washed bed clothes on high heat.

Get both the H1N1 and seasonal flu shots. Avoid the possibility of two rounds of the flu this year!



The following Agenda Reflects New Projects and the Most Requested Topics from the Survey. Scholarships are available for registration fees for many counties. See page 3.

Family Practice: Best Practices:

Pediatric Obesity Project – Dr. Lynn Bowers and David Pryor from New Castle Pediatrics RHC will share the details of their project that is now in its 3rd year. Could this be useful in your practice?

Talking About Tobacco Control with RHC Patients - Camille Kalil from ITPC will give the details about the Tobacco Quitline. Studies show that three most effective means of changing patients behaviors are: smokefree policies, tobacco tax to increase the prices, AND a few words about their tobacco use from their provider at every visit.

Rural Healthcare Program: Broad Band Discounts Becky Sanders, FCC Pilot Project
Could you be saving dollars?

EHR/EMR Panel Charles James, Jr., from North American Healthcare Management Services and Indiana RHCs Panel. Charles will talk to us about his experience with the clinics that he works with in selection and adaptation of electronic records. Earlier adaption brings financial incentives, but care must be taken to ensure a good fit. Other RHCs in Indiana that have an EHR will also be ready to share about their experience.

Telehealth: Mental Health, Asthma and Diabetes Management Applications Stephanie Laws, RN, BSN and Erik Southard, RN, MSN, CFNP from Richard G. Lugar Center for Rural Health will share with us how three telehealth projects have expanded rural clinics' capabilities. Please come and share what your needs are in these areas as the Lugar Center and IRHA watch for funding opportunities to support and expand rural access.

Hands on Event: Walk Through Quality Assessment Performance Improvement (QAPI) BethAnn Perkins, RN, from Principal Health Consulting Strategies, Inc., will walk us through the process. We remember better when we actually do it! At the end you will have started a QA project and have the resources to take back to the office.

How Does a Family Prepare for the Flu? Janet Archer, RN from Indiana State Department of Health The flu arrived at the Stidham house already. So we are implementing the Stidham house infection control policies. Come learn how to minimize exposure to your family; learn strategies to teach your spouse and children to use at work and school.

RHC Billing BethAnn Perkins, RN, from Principal Health Consulting Strategies RHC billing is unique and always requested and needed. BethAnn is also the director of the RHC in Rush County here in Indiana. Although the RHC billing regulations are federally mandated, BethAnn is familiar with the new Cahaba MAC.

H1N1 continued from page 1.

- Providers CANNOT charge a fee for the vaccine, syringes or needles since they are being provided at no cost to the provider.
- Providers may charge a fee for the administration of the vaccine to the patient, their health insurance plan, or other third party payer.

In the Workplace:

- Encourage sick workers to stay home and away from the work place.
- Establish policies for flexible work hours and telecommuting, if feasible.
- Display posters that encourage good infection control practices (proper hand washing and coughing/sneezing etiquette).
- Provide sufficient facilities for hand washing and alcohol-based hand sanitizers or wipes in lobbies, corridors, and restrooms.
- Provide tissues, disinfectants, and disposable towels for employees to clean their work surfaces, as well as appropriate disposal receptacles.
- Arrange waiting room to space patients out.
- Establish protocol for phone triage of influenza patients. Ensure that patients understand the symptoms that would indicate the need for an office visit or emergency room visit after hours.
- Share flu plans with employees and communicate expectations.
- Identify services that will be reduced or temporarily stopped to shift resources to care for the potential surge of influenza patients
- Implement business continuity plans to maintain essential operations if there is significant absenteeism.
- Practice - establish an emergency communications plan.
- Encourage everyone to get both the H1N1 and seasonal flu shots. Avoid the possibility of two bouts of the flu this year!

For more information for planning, workforce protection, business continuity, preparation checklists, toolkits, and guidelines, reference the following websites:

<http://www.flu.gov/plan/healthcare/index.html>

<http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/guidance/workplace.htm>

<http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/PDF/rr/rr5810.pdf>

<http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/>

<http://www.flu.gov>

Update on Indiana's Emergency System for Advance Registration of Volunteer Health Professionals (ESAR-VHP)

ESAR-VHP Is the State's secure, electronic, professional volunteer database. ESAR-VHP prevents loss of time involved in certifying credentials of professional volunteers in the midst of a crisis. Another lesson learned from Katrina.

In the event of a disaster declared by the Indiana State Department of Health, public health officials will identify potential health care volunteers based on the specific needs of the emergency response.

If contacted to volunteer during an emergency and circumstances prevent your availability, the option to accept or decline any volunteer request exists.

If the opportunity to volunteer is accepted, further instructions including where to report and what to bring will follow. Project director, Rachel Fuhr, has plans for a user manual.

ESAR-VHP registration system is currently able to register the following health care professionals with active Indiana licenses:

Physician

Physician Assistant

Registered Nurse (RN)

Certified Nurse Midwife

Clinical Nurse Specialist

Nurse Practitioner

Licensed Professional Nurse (LPN)

Respiratory Care Practitioner

Radiologic Technologist/Technician

Pharmacist

Pharmacy Technician

Psychologist

Mental Health Counselor

Social Worker

Clinical Social Worker

Marriage and Family Therapist

Dentist

Dental Hygienist

Environmental Health Specialist

Sign up by going to:

<https://healthnet.isdh.in.gov/volunteerregistry/>

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Upcoming Events

October 6-7 NRHA RHC conference
<http://www.ruralhealthweb.org/portland>

October 7 - 11, 2009
American College of Nurse Practitioners 2009 National Clinical Conference

<http://www.acnpweb.org/>

American College of Nurse Practitioners (ACNP)
Albuquerque, NM

October 14 - 17, 2009
2009 AAFP Scientific Assembly
<http://www.aafp.org/online/en/home/cme/aafpcourses/conferences/assembly.html>

American Academy of Family Physicians (AAFP)
Boston, MA

October 21st
IRHA's RHC Fall Workshop
9am-4pm
Register online
<http://www.indianaruralhealth.org>
Holiday Inn, Columbus, IN

2009 Tri-State Health Information Technology Conference
November 4-5, 2009
Plainfield, Indiana
<http://www.indianaruralhealth.org>

AHEC Scholarships available for RHC Fall Workshop \$75 Registration Fee.

Clinics in the following counties may request a scholarship application from IRHA:

Clay

Fountain

Greene

Owen

Sullivan

Vermillion

Warren

Carroll

Cass

Jasper,

Newton

Starke

White

Daviess

Dubois

Gibson

Perry

Pike

Spencer

Brown

Crawford

Franklin

Jennings

Johnson

Martin

Monroe

Orange

Rush

Scott

Switzerland