



**North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services
Office of Public Affairs**

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H1N1 Cases Down, But Threat Still Lingers

RALEIGH — While cases of H1N1 flu have decreased since their peak in fall 2009, North Carolina public health officials are still encouraging the public to be immunized to safeguard their health. Seven H1N1-related deaths have occurred in the state during the past four weeks. State Health Director Jeff Engel says it is a clear sign that flu season is not over.

“We continue to see hundreds of people hospitalized each week with flu-related complications,” Engel said. “The vaccine is safe and effective in preventing the flu. With plenty of vaccine on hand, there is no reason for North Carolinians to fall victim to H1N1.”

As of Feb. 20, approximately 1.66 million doses of H1N1 vaccine had been given to North Carolinians. That is just over half of the 3.2 million doses distributed by the state to providers, including local health departments, physicians’ offices, retail and independent pharmacies, colleges and universities, and hospitals. In addition, many retail chain pharmacies have ordered vaccine directly from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

The N.C. Division of Public Health and local health departments across the state are working to increase the number of vaccinations by taking free vaccine clinics out into their communities. In Wake County, public health nurses are visiting child care centers, while Cumberland County is reaching out to the faith community, even holding clinics at churches on Sundays.

In Mecklenburg County, public health officials are partnering with the Old North State Medical Society to offer H1N1 vaccinations during this week’s CIAA Basketball Tournament. Eight colleges across the state are participating in a targeted public health campaign to immunize young people.

“Our goal is to make vaccine as accessible as possible to anyone who wants it,” Engel said. “I applaud our local health departments and student health providers for their creativity and stamina in meeting the challenge of H1N1.”

For information on H1N1, including the latest statistics on flu incidence rates, visit flu.nc.gov.

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