

Pandemic (H1N1) 2009

Please distribute to all physicians at this fax.

Date: February 3, 2010
To: Family Physicians, Pediatricians and Obstetricians
From: AHS Senior Medical Officer of Health and Senior Physician Executive
Re: **Continued Need for Patient H1N1 Immunization**

Your assistance is requested to continue to encourage your patients to be immunized for pH1N1 influenza.

As you are aware, this past fall and early winter Alberta Health Services staff and physicians across the province responded to an outbreak of the novel pH1N1 influenza virus. The AHS immunization program was a key prevention strategy to help protect Albertans from influenza and reduce the spread of illness.

While much of the media attention that came with H1N1 influenza has now diminished, immunization clinics for both H1N1 and seasonal influenza continue to be available through Public Health clinics across the province.

However, to date, the number of Albertans who have chosen to be immunized is less than optimal. For example, less than 45% of Albertans with chronic health conditions, those most at risk for serious illness from influenza, have been immunized for influenza.

H1N1 influenza immunization is recommended for all Albertans over six months old. Immunization is especially important for those pregnant, for individuals with chronic health conditions, and for individuals who plan to travel in coming months.

Physician response to health services demands during the fall pandemic response was outstanding, and we are now seeking your assistance again, this time to help improve immunization uptake.

To ensure individuals most at risk of serious illness from influenza are aware of the protection immunization can provide, and opportunities to be immunized, we ask that you take a moment during your interactions with patients and clients to encourage them to be immunized if they have not already done so.

It is our hope that hearing encouragement to be immunized for influenza from their own physician will make a difference to people who may otherwise not choose to be immunized.

It's not too late to be immunized. Alberta is only partway through our influenza season and immunization will still protect your patients from serious illness.

If your office wishes, an influenza immunization reminder card that can be provided to patients and clients is available at www.albertahealthservices.ca Clinic information is also available on the Alberta Health Services website.

Thank you for helping to encourage Albertans to get their influenza immunization.

Sincerely,

Dr. D. Megran
Senior Physician Executive

Dr. G. Predy
Senior Medical Officer of Health

Physician Update: Continued Need for Patient Immunization
Issued by: Senior Medical Officer of Health
Approved by: Senior Physician Executive

February 3, 2010