

March 22, 2010

Influenza immunization programs wrapping up for the year

EDMONTON – As we near the end of influenza season, Alberta Health Services' H1N1 and seasonal influenza immunization will be closing.

“The H1N1 and seasonal immunization program will end on March 31, 2010, with exception of availability for travelers,” said Dr. Marcia Johnson, Medical Officer of Health (Edmonton Zone), Alberta Health Services. “People who have travel plans who have not yet received the H1N1 or seasonal immunization this influenza season are encouraged to be immunized before they travel.”

Immunization is the single best defense against influenza, and Alberta Health Services recommends that all Albertans over six months of age get immunized.

Recommendations for H1N1 immunization for children were also updated in February, based on new information from clinical trials.

The clinical trials showed an excellent immune response in children under 10 years of age with only one dose of H1N1 vaccine. These data, together with the low level of H1N1 influenza activity across the country, has led national, provincial and territorial public health officials to make the recommendation for only one dose of H1N1 vaccine for all children 6 months to 9 years of age. This includes children 3 to 9 years of age with chronic medical conditions for whom two doses of H1N1 vaccine were previously recommended.

“While influenza immunization will end on March 31, 2010, vaccine will remain available throughout the spring and summer for travelers,” said Dr. Johnson.

Visit www.albertahealthservices.ca for more information or call Health Link Alberta to speak to a registered nurse 24 hours a day, seven days a week. In the Edmonton area, call 780-408-LINK (5465) or outside the local calling area, call toll free at 1-866-408-LINK (5465).

Alberta Health Services is the provincial health authority responsible for planning and delivering health supports and services for more than 3.5 million adults and children living in Alberta. Its mission is to provide a patient-focused, quality health system that is accessible and sustainable for all Albertans.

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For media inquiries, contact:

Holly Regel
Communications
Cell: 780-906-5224