



NEWS RELEASE

October 21, 2009

PEI ANNOUNCES ROLLOUT OF H1N1 VACCINE CAMPAIGN

CHARLOTTETOWN, PEI -- The province has announced the rollout of its H1N1 Influenza Vaccine campaign following an announcement made today by Health Canada that regulatory approval has been received and the H1N1 vaccine is now approved for use.

“We are pleased to announce the launch of our H1N1 influenza vaccine campaign here in PEI,” said Doug Currie, Minister of Health. “We know that there is enough vaccine for every person who needs and wants it in PEI and, starting next week, staff will begin to offer the vaccine to those who would benefit most from immunization against the H1N1 Flu Virus.”

The vaccine program will be rolled out over the next four to six weeks and the schedule is based on the recommendations of the Public Health Agency of Canada. The vaccine will be delivered by Public Health nurses and others at no cost, at various sites across the province, including public health nursing clinics, schools, health centres, correctional facilities and healthcare facilities.

“Each year there are different strains of influenza going around and, this year, the predominant strain is H1N1,” said Dr. Heather Morrison, Chief Health Officer for the Department of Health. “Over the past few weeks, there has been an overall increase in H1N1 activity in Canada and for most people, the H1N1 vaccine is the vaccine they need first that will offer the best protection against influenza this fall.”

The H1N1 vaccine is developed the same way as the regular seasonal influenza vaccine but offers protection against the H1N1 influenza virus. It is important to note that for those who receive the vaccine, it often takes up to two weeks to develop immunity to the virus.

Most people will require only one dose of the vaccine, with the exception of children who are six months up to 10 years of age, who will require two doses of the vaccine to develop adequate immunity. The vaccine is usually given into the arm of adults and children over one year of age and into the thigh for infants, six months to one year of age. The vaccine is not given to infants under the age of six months.

The H1N1 Vaccine Schedule in PEI will be the following:

Week of October 26

- Health Care Workers
- Household contacts of children less than 6 months
- Children six months old up to school entry
- People with chronic conditions under the age of 65
- Household contacts and care providers of people who are immune compromised
- *First Nations and Aboriginal Population*

Week of November 2

- Elementary Schools
- First responders

Week of November 9

- Junior and Senior High Schools
- Pregnant women

Week of November 16

- Mass public clinics

Week of November 23

- Second dose for children six months of age to school entry

Week of November 30

- Second dose for children school entry to nine years of age

A specialized clinic for people with egg allergies will be offered as well to ensure that every person can receive the vaccine if they wish.

Announcements will start next week on the times and locations for upcoming clinics. The public is advised to watch the newspapers, visit www.gov.pe.ca/flu or call 1-888-748-5454 for further information.