

Delaware General Health District

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NEWS RELEASE

DELAWARE GENERAL HEALTH DISTRICT WEEKLY INFLUENZA UPDATE

P.O. Box 570 1-3 W. Winter St. Delaware OH 43015
740-368-1700 FAX 740-368-1736 Web Site: www.delawarehealth.org

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

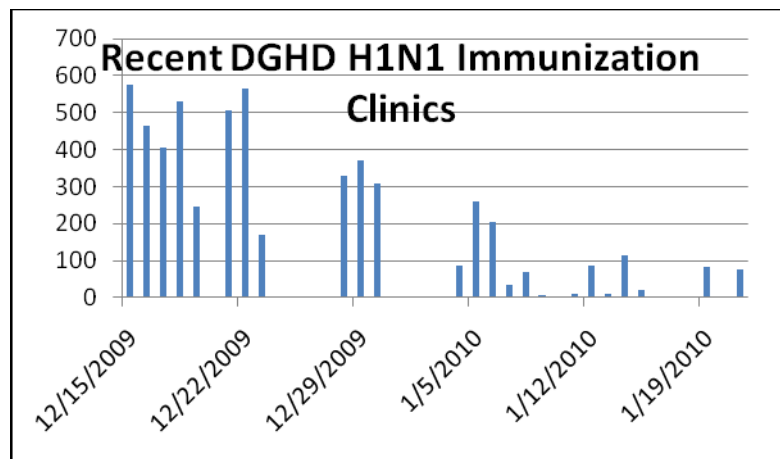
For further information contact Jesse Carter, public information officer, at 740-203-2085.

DELAWARE, Oh., Jan. 22, 2010 – This is the weekly flu update issued by the Delaware General Health District.

H1N1 flu immunizations remain available for free from our agency. We are giving the immunizations by appointment on all weekday mornings and Tuesday and Thursday afternoons. A clinic is scheduled for Saturday, Jan. 23, with appointments available from 9:15 to 11:45 a.m. We are continuing to use Grady Memorial Hospital's beautiful new Delaware Health Center for these clinics in addition to our downtown Delaware facility.

We continue to urge nearly everyone to get the H1N1 immunization, especially persons at greatest risk for H1N1 flu complications: pregnant women, children and young adults ages 6 months through 24 years, persons with chronic medical conditions, and parents and caregivers of infants up to 6 months old.

At the same time, we are managing the reality that public interest in the H1N1 immunizations has diminished. The incidence of the disease has decreased significantly since last fall, and news media have scaled back coverage of the subject. Turnouts at our H1N1 immunization clinics have decreased from several hundred per day in mid-December to fewer than 100 per day.



Because of that, we have been ramping down the scale of our clinic operations. We have reduced our reliance upon Delaware County EMTs and Medical Reserve Corps volunteer nurses to inject vaccine for several weeks. The Health District's own nursing staff has been able to serve recent H1N1 clinic clients. Health District nurses also have been able to resume other duties, such as Neighborhood Health Center visits, which were canceled in November and December because of the mass clinics.

"We can ramp back up very quickly," said Joan Bowe R.N., DGHD Personal Health Director. "If – or when – the third wave of H1N1 flu raises public concern and brings back crowds looking for the immunizations, we will be able to serve them. We gave more than 2,500 immunizations at our biggest clinics in October and November, and we could do it again next week if the clients appear."

Nearly 17,000 H1N1 immunizations have been given by our agency since October. Recent estimates from the Ohio Department of Health show that Delaware County had the third-best H1N1 immunization rate for high-risk residents among all 88 Ohio counties. ODH reported that about 19 percent of Delaware County residents had gotten H1N1 immunizations, which is very close to the national average.

ODH director Dr. Alvin Jackson congratulated the DGHD staff for those achievements in a telephone call to Delaware Health Commissioner Frances M. Veverka MPH R.S. this week.

Parents are reminded that children under 10 need to get a booster dose of H1N1 vaccine at least 28 days after their initial dose.

LOCAL H1N1 CLINICS: To make an appointment for an H1N1 immunization, log on to www.delawarehealth.org. Follow the link and instructions to use the online scheduling system. You can sign up your entire family at a time convenient for you. Persons lacking Internet access can schedule appointments by phoning 740-368-1700. Appointments are available:

- At the Delaware Health Center, 801 Ohio Health Boulevard, Delaware, every Tuesday and Thursday from 3:30 to 6:30 p.m. except for Jan. 26. There also will be a clinic there on Saturday, Jan. 23, from 9:15 to 11:45 a.m.
- At the Delaware General Health District clinic, 3 W. Winter St., Delaware, on weekdays from 7:45 to 9 a.m.

A few walk-ins can be accommodated at these clinics in case you are unable to make an appointment.

LOCAL CASES: No new confirmed cases of H1N1 flu were reported in the Delaware General Health District over the past week.

SENTINEL SITES AND OTHER SURVEILLANCE: The number of people being seen by a healthcare provider due to Influenza Like Illness continues to be higher than normal, but is continuing to decline. We have seen a slight increase in over-the-counter sales of throat lozenges as we enter the usual winter cold and flu season. Over-the-counter flu treatment sales have returned to normal, according to reports from participating local retailers.