

Lois A Day**Authorized Signature****Number:** CW-IM-09-025**Issue Date:** 10/15/09**Topic:** Foster Care**Subject:** H1N1 Vaccination for children in DHS Custody**Applies to (check all that apply):**

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|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> | All DHS employees | <input type="checkbox"/> | County Mental Health Directors |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | Area Agencies on Aging | <input type="checkbox"/> | Health Services |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | Children, Adults and Families | <input type="checkbox"/> | Seniors and People with Disabilities |
| <input type="checkbox"/> | County DD Program Managers | <input type="checkbox"/> | Other (please specify): |

Message:

Oregon is preparing for cases of pandemic H1N1 flu this fall and winter, and all of us here at DHS Children, Adults and Families want to keep children safe and healthy. With that goal in mind, the Department's intention is to have children who are in the legal custody of the Department of Human Services, Child Welfare and are placed in foster care, relative care or in residential treatment settings vaccinated for pandemic H1N1 flu.

Children, Adults, and Families will follow the guidance of the Oregon Public Health Division regarding vaccinations of children who are **older than 6 months of age** and will seek immunizations for these children and youth when the vaccine becomes available in the local communities.

If you have children or youth on your caseload who are in substitute care settings with foster parents, relative caregivers or residential programs, please assist these caregivers in obtaining immunizations for the children. This does not apply to children who are at home with their parents.

There are a few things to keep in mind;

- Some children should not be vaccinated without first consulting their physician:
 - Those who have severe allergy to eggs or other vaccine components following a prior dose of vaccine.
 - Those with a history of Guillain-Barré syndrome
 - Those immunosuppressed for any reason.

- Those with chronic medical conditions.
- Those receiving aspirin therapy.
- Children **less than six months of age** (influenza vaccine is not approved for this age group)
- Those who have a moderate to severe illness with a fever should wait until they recover to get vaccinated.

The child's Oregon Health Plan card will be accepted for these immunizations as a service.

A separate letter will be sent to parent(s) of the children and to caregivers of the children notifying them of the Department's intention to immunize all children. As you are aware some parents or caregivers may not agree with health care decisions made by the Department. The letter requests that the parent(s) notify their caseworker by Oct. 15th. Care providers may begin obtaining the vaccination for children only after that date, as immunizations become available.

- If a **parent** requests that his or her child not be immunized while in substitute care, please consult with your supervisor and determine the health care needs of this child. Consider the child's previous immunization records and health care issues and consult with the child's primary care physician. If you decide to pursue the immunization, please notify the court and legal parties in writing of the Department's intention. The court may intervene in this matter. Please document all efforts.
- If the **substitute caregiver** requests that the child in their placement not be immunized, please consult with your supervisor and determine the health care needs of this child. Consider the child's previous immunization records and health care issues and consult with the child's primary care physician. It is the Department's decision if the child receives the immunization. Please document all efforts.

As with many of the health care messages around pandemic H1N1, please continue to share these basic messages with your clients, providers and co-workers to help them stay healthy and stop the spread of H1N1 flu:

- **Get vaccinated.** The most important step toward preventing the spread of flu is vaccination.
- **Cover your coughs and sneezes.** Sneeze or cough into a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash after use. If a tissue is not available, use your sleeve, not your hand.
- **Wash your hands.** Wash your hands often with soap and water, especially after you cough or sneeze. Alcohol-based hand sanitizers are also effective for older children.
- **Stay home if ill.** If you are sick, please stay home.

For more information on pandemic H1N1 flu, please visit www.flu.oregon.gov
There is also a Hotline for information at **1-800-978-3040**.

Thank you,
Oregon DHS Child Welfare

If you have any questions about this information, contact:

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