

Pandemic Influenza Preparedness

Latest Developments

CMS Issues Guidance to States on Responding to the H1N1 Influenza Pandemic <http://www.cms.hhs.gov/smdl/downloads/SHO092409.pdf>.

Guidance issued to states on September 25, 2009 (SHO # 09-011) by Cindy Mann, Director of the Center for Medicaid and State Operations (see NASDDDS Pan Flu Bulletin September 25, 2009) provides information on eight key topics of interest to state DD agencies:

1. Vaccination Funding and Vaccine Administration
2. Presumptive Eligibility
3. Beneficiaries with Suspected or Confirmed 2009 H1N1 Influenza
4. Provisions for Beneficiaries Receiving Services Through Managed Care Entities
5. People Receiving Home and Community-Based Waiver Services and State Plan Services
6. Health Care Workforce Planning
7. Administrative Funding for Activities Related to Education and Outreach
8. Emergency Medical Services Under Section 1903(v) of the Social Security Act

Section 5 regarding *People Receiving Home and Community-Based Waiver Services and State Plan Services* addresses some of the operational issues identified by NASDDDS staff in the letter to CMS on April 30, 2009 (see <http://www.nasddds.org/PanFlu/Pandemic%20Flu%20Recommendations%20to%20CMS%206-5-09.pdf>), regarding the need for program flexibility to appropriately respond to the needs of individuals with IDD receiving support who contract the H1N1 influenza virus (see page 8). Among other points the Guidance notes that:

- Under the 1915(c) waiver program, states can “hold” waiver slots for program participants who may require short-term hospital or institutional care as a result of influenza or other an acute care need.
- Individuals receiving home health care services under the state plan, who require hospitalization or care in a nursing facility may resume services upon discharge.
- Under existing Medicaid regulations, states have flexibility under both the 1915(c) and State plan programs to ensure availability of supports to respond to sudden

changes in recipients' need for services to respond in situations where caregivers become ill and unable to provide supports.

- States have the authority and flexibility (and a statutory responsibility) to adjust the waiver participant's plan of care to respond to changing situations in the participant's life that may require additional services. Any services covered under the approved waiver and authorized by the State are eligible for Federal Medical Assistance Percentage (FMAP).
- If the State determines that additional services, not already authorized in the approved waiver, are needed, the State may request an amendment to the waiver to add additional services or to serve additional persons. CMS is developing mechanisms through its Web-based waiver application to further expedite the processing of emergency requests from the waiver programs, in the event of a 2009 H1N1 pandemic.
- Additional guidance addresses CMS' expectations that provider agencies have an "emergency" plan in place to continue to furnish the services needed by the beneficiary in the event that the primary caregiver is unable to furnish care.

New Information

Key Flu Indicators <http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/update.htm>

Each week CDC analyzes information about influenza disease activity in the United States and publishes findings of key flu indicators in a report called [FluView](#).

Mandatory Flu Shots Hit Resistance. An increasing number of doctors, nurses and other health-care workers for the first time are being required to get flu shots because of concerns that the swine flu pandemic may overwhelm the U.S. health-care system. Some health-care workers are objecting for a variety of reasons, including concerns about the safety of the vaccine, the sentiment that being vaccinated should remain voluntary and, in some cases, the mistaken fear that the vaccine itself can cause the flu. *From the Washington Post 9/25/09*

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/article/2009/09/25/AR2009092503854.html>

CDC - [Questions and Answers on 2009 H1N1 Influenza A Vaccine Safety](#). 9/14/09

The 2009 H1N1 influenza vaccine is expected to have a similar safety profile as seasonal flu vaccines, which have a very good safety track record. [More>>](#)

Pandemic Preparedness Resources

Preparing for and Responding to Pandemic Influenza: Implications for People With Disabilities - new article

<http://www.ajph.org/cgi/reprint/99/S2/S294?maxtoshow=&HITS=10&hits=10&RE>

State, local, tribal, and territorial emergency managers and public health officials must address the specific needs of people with disabilities in their pandemic influenza plans. Evidence from Hurricane Katrina indicated that this population was disproportionately affected by the storm and aftermath. People with disabilities, particularly those who require personal assistance and those who reside in congregate care facilities, may be at increased risk during an influenza pandemic because of disrupted care or the introduction of the virus by their caregivers. Emergency and public health planners must ensure that personal assistance agencies and congregate care operators make provisions for backup staffing and that those who provide critical care are given adequate antiviral drugs and vaccines as they become available. (Am J Public Health. 2009; 99:S294-S300. doi:10.2105/AJPH.2009.162677).

Consumer Friendly Informational Materials. The California Department of Developmental Services has developed a number of consumer-friendly documents with direct involvement of persons with IDD. The materials present information in a clear, plain language format that is accessible by people who have a wide range of language skills and abilities. Please contact Mark Starford for additional information, (916) 574-1023, mark@brcenter.org. Here are links to a few examples of the consumer friendly/easy to read materials:

- <http://www.dds.ca.gov/ConsumerCorner/docs/FeelingSafeBeingSafe.pdf>
- http://www.dds.ca.gov/ConsumerCorner/docs/ThinkingAhead_English.pdf
- http://www.dds.ca.gov/ConsumerCorner/docs/GuideHealthyLiving_English.pdf
- Here is a link to a CD providing guidance on how to make complex ideas simple: <http://www.dds.ca.gov/ConsumerCorner/WaysComplex.cfm>

2009-10 Flu Season Print Materials from the CDC. This year's seasonal flu materials also include messaging to address the 2009 H1N1 flu (sometimes called "swine flu") recommendations. All materials are free for download—no printed versions are available. They may be printed on a standard office printer, or you may use a commercial printer. <http://www.cdc.gov/flu/freeresources/print.htm>.