

EPI CONNECTIONS

August/September 2009

A Monthly Newsletter of the Communicable Disease Division

Novel H1N1 Vaccination Recommendations

The Novel H1N1 virus has continued to spread illness throughout the summer. Boulder County Public Health (BCPH) is currently planning for the distribution of novel H1N1 vaccine within the county. Providers wishing to provide novel H1N1 vaccine to their patients should complete the form sent as a Health Alert Message on August 13, or go to www.BoulderCountyHealth.org to download the form. It is expected that vaccine will be available in multi-dose vials, prefilled syringes, and nasal spray. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) anticipates the H1N1 vaccine to be ready mid-October.

Below is the summary of the CDC's Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) guidelines. The CDC hopes that people will begin to get vaccinated against seasonal influenza as well.

Novel H1N1 Vaccine

The ACIP, a panel of medical and public health experts, met on July 29, 2009, to make recommendations about which population groups should receive the new H1N1 vaccine when it becomes available. While it is still unknown what the severity of the virus will be during the fall and winter months, ACIP considered several factors to make their recommendations, including: current disease patterns; populations most at risk for severe illness based on current trends in illness, hospitalizations, and deaths; how much vaccine is expected to be available; and the timing of vaccine availability. The groups recommended to receive the novel H1N1 influenza vaccine include:

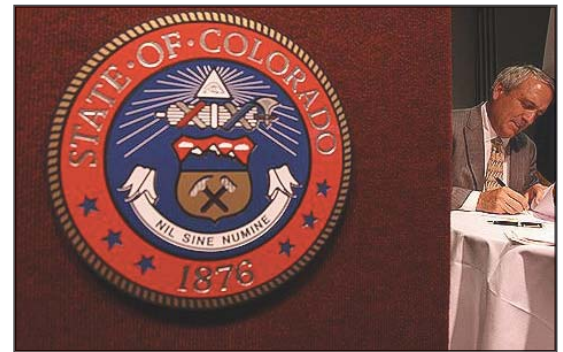
- Pregnant women because they are at higher risk of complications and can potentially provide protection to infants who cannot be vaccinated.
- Household contacts and caregivers for children younger than 6 months of age because younger infants are at higher risk of influenza-related complications and cannot be vaccinated. Vaccination of those in close contact with infants less than 6 months old might help protect infants by "cocooning" them from the virus.



H1N1 Flu, continued on page 2

New State Law Provides Immunity to MRC Members

On June 3, 2009, Governor Bill Ritter signed Senate Bill 09-13 into law. The law provides immunity from civil liability to Medical Reserve Corps (MRC) units and members during emergency or disaster planning, training, or response activities. The new law also applies to citizen emergency response teams, citizen corps councils, incident management teams, local emergency planning committees, fire protection districts, volunteer fire, ambulance, emergency service and rescue groups, and their volunteers. It also provides civil liability protections to volunteer firefighters when they are making decisions under stressful, life-threatening conditions, and to fire departments that donate surplus equipment to other agencies.



"The new Colorado immunity law provides additional legal protections for Medical Reserve Corps members and, more importantly, clarifies the protection that was previously cobbled together from various other statutes," said Beverly Gholson, a member of the Medical Reserve Corps of Boulder County. "As a member, I like the unambiguous nature of this law and the specific mention of the MRC. It certainly gives me more peace of mind while volunteering."

The new law explicitly provides that affiliated volunteers shall not be liable for the death of or injury to any person or loss of or damage to property, except in cases of gross negligence or willful or wanton acts

New State Law, continued on page 2



H1N1 Vaccination Recommendations, continued from page 1

- Health care and emergency medical services personnel because infections among health care workers have been reported, and this can be a potential source of infection for vulnerable patients. Also, increased absenteeism in this population could reduce health care system capacity.
- Individuals aged 6 months through 24 years:
 - Children from 6 months through 18 years of age because many cases of novel H1N1 influenza have been in children, and they are in close contact with each other in school and day care settings, which increases the likelihood of disease spread.
 - Young adults 19 through 24 years of age because many cases of novel H1N1 influenza have been seen in healthy young adults, and they often live, work, and study in close proximity; and they are also a frequently mobile population.
- Persons aged 25 through 64 years who have health conditions associated with higher risk of medical complications from influenza.

The CDC does not expect that there will be a shortage of novel H1N1 vaccine; however, should supply be limited, the ACIP has made recommendations about which people should be prioritized. For more information, go to the CDC website at www.cdc.gov/h1n1.

After the demand for vaccine for the prioritized groups has been met at the local level, programs and providers should also begin vaccinating people 25 through 64 years. Current studies indicate that the risk for infection among persons age 65 or older is less than the risk for younger age groups. However, after vaccine demand among younger age groups has been met, programs and providers should offer vaccination to people 65 or older.

If you have questions about novel H1N1 vaccine distribution and administration, please call the Communicable Disease Division at 303.413.7500.

Contributed by Gina Bare

MEDICAL RESERVE CORPS OF BOULDER COUNTY

Interested in joining and assisting fellow Boulder County residents?



Contact:
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New State Law, continued from page 1

or omissions, when engaged in planning, training, or response activities related to a natural disaster, hazardous material release, public health emergency, or act of terrorism. An injured person may sue and recover civil damages based upon the negligent operation of a motor vehicle, but damages are limited to the amount of insurance coverage maintained by the volunteer or organization.

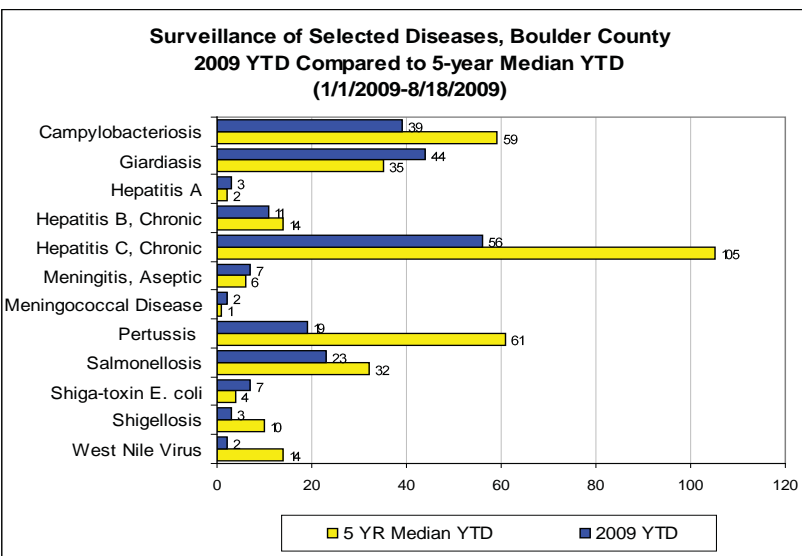
The language is part of a broader set of immunity provisions in the state statutes, and all MRC units in Colorado are urged to establish a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with the county emergency management, local law enforcement, fire agencies, or local emergency planning committees in order to benefit from the protections.

The new law is named the “Marc Mullenix Volunteer Firefighter Protection Act.” Chief Mullenix was a wildland firefighter who previously served as the Wildland Fire Division Chief for the Boulder Fire Department. He passed away in January 2008 in Mancos, Colorado, at the age of 50.

To review the new law, visit: www.state.co.us/gov_dir/leg_dir/olls/s12009a/sl_413.pdf.

Contributed by Cheryl Runyon

At Mid-Year Point, Enteric Disease Patterns Changing Slightly from Past Years



As of mid-August, we are seeing a slight increase in cases of giardiasis and E. coli. However, cases of campylobacteriosis, salmonellosis, and shigellosis have decreased in number. At this point, there is no indication why these patterns have changed, but we will continue to monitor these diseases through the year.

Thus far in the summer season, we are seeing low numbers of human cases of West Nile virus (WNV) infection. However, we often see the majority of our cases from mid-August through the end of the September, so this pattern could change.

Beginning in our next issue, we will include an H1N1 hospitalized cases count in our graph. At this time, non-hospitalized cases are not reportable.