



THE HOSPITAL & HEALTHSYSTEM ASSOCIATION OF PENNSYLVANIA

November 13, 2009

**To:** Honorable Members of the General Assembly  
**From:** Kathleen C. Mebus Vice President, State Legislation  
**Subject:** Hospital Response to Seasonal Flu and H1N1 Flu

**Issue:** Unlike previous years when we have experienced seasonal flu outbreaks, this year we also are experiencing the H1N1 strain of flu. This memo describes the major steps being taken by hospitals, which are well-prepared for a pandemic situation.

**Status:** There is a nationwide shortage of vaccines for both seasonal and H1N1 viruses. As vaccines become available, hospitals are immunizing the five target groups:

- pregnant women;
- children;
- individuals who live with or care for children;
- adults with chronic illnesses; and
- health care and emergency medical services personnel.

HAP is working with the Department of Health, which is responsible for distribution of the H1N1 vaccine, and for monitoring this health care situation. Hospitals are doing the following:

- Immunizing health care workers who have direct contact with patients;
- Providing vaccines to patients when they are available;
- Managing patient flow by establishing alternate intake and treatment locations within and outside of the hospital to reduce exposure to other patients; and
- Limiting exposure by limiting the age of visitors and restricting visiting hours.

Antiseptic hand cleansers and notices alerting individuals who might be sick to stay home can be found at most hospitals. Some hospitals are screening visitors for flu-like symptoms and asking them to refrain from visiting patients. Surveillance of H1N1 and its impact on communities continues, and additional actions may be required.

For up to date information you can access either the Center for Disease Control and Prevention website [www.flu.gov](http://www.flu.gov) or the Department of Health's website [www.health.state.pa.us](http://www.health.state.pa.us).

If you or your staffs have questions or issues regarding H1N1, please do not hesitate to contact me at (717) 561-5351 or [kmebus@haponline.org](mailto:kmebus@haponline.org).

