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## PRESS RELEASE

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### **Delays in Shipments of and High Demand for Seasonal Flu Vaccine Cause Confusion**

Concord, NH – The seasonal flu vaccine campaign in New Hampshire has been progressing. The unusually early availability of the seasonal flu vaccine, the push to have people get the vaccine as soon as possible, and the changeover by manufacturing companies to the H1N1 vaccine has caused some confusion and delays, however. The New Hampshire Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) urges people to continue looking for the seasonal vaccine until they find one over the coming weeks because there should still be plenty over time.

“While DHHS is only involved in seasonal flu vaccines for children through our Vaccines for Children Program,” said DHHS Commissioner Nicholas Toumpas, “the vaccine is an important prevention tool to keep people from getting seasonal flu. Part of our mission is to help our citizens stay healthy so we want to encourage everyone, especially people in high-risk categories for complications from flu, to get the vaccine.”

Influenza is a very serious disease of the lungs, nose, and throat. The illness is spread from person to person through coughing and sneezing. Typical flu symptoms include fever, headache, extreme tiredness, dry cough, sore throat, runny or stuffy nose, and muscle aches.

The federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has confirmed that a number of vaccine manufacturers have switched over to making H1N1 vaccine instead of seasonal flu. There are still many doses of seasonal flu vaccine that have been received, administered, and are continuing to be produced. Approximately 70 million doses of seasonal flu vaccine have been distributed across the country as of September 25, 2009.

This is approximately 61% of the doses that are expected to be distributed for this season.

“Providers should work directly with the manufacturers to determine the timing for the delivery of their orders,” said Dr. Jose Montero, Public Health Director. “DHHS does have a supply of seasonal flu vaccines for the pediatric age group, which can be ordered through the New Hampshire Immunization Program. We encourage providers not to hold vaccine clinics

unless they have adequate supply of vaccine and we will update them on this issue once we have more information.”

The at-risk groups that should receive a seasonal flu vaccine every year are:

- Children aged 6 months up to their 19th birthday

- Pregnant women

- People 50 years of age or older

- People of any age with certain chronic medical conditions, including asthma or heart disease, or those who are immune compromised

- People who live with or care for those high risk of flu complications, including:

  - Health care workers

  - Household contacts of persons at high risk of complications from the flu

  - Household contacts and out-of-home caregivers of children younger than 6 months of age (these children are too young to be vaccinated)

Those who should not be vaccinated for seasonal flu are:

- People with a severe allergy to chicken eggs

- People who have had a severe reaction to an influenza vaccination in the past

- People who developed Guillain-Barré syndrome (GBS) within 6 weeks of previous influenza vaccination

- Children younger than 6 months of age (the vaccine is not approved for that age group)

- People who have a moderate or severe illness with a fever should wait to get vaccinated until their symptoms lessen.

For more information, the website for all New Hampshire H1N1 information is [www.dhhs.state.nh.us/DHHS/DHHS\\_SITE/swineflu.htm](http://www.dhhs.state.nh.us/DHHS/DHHS_SITE/swineflu.htm), or visit the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention website at [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov) and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services website at [www.flu.gov](http://www.flu.gov).