

**Health and Healthy Living**

Public Health Division

Office of the Chief Public Health Officer

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October 2, 2009

Dear Colleague:

**Re: Recommendation for the start of the 2009-2010 Seasonal Influenza Vaccine Program**

**PEOPLE FOR WHOM THE SEASONAL INFLUENZA VACCINE IS RECOMMENDED NOW:**

- Individuals 65 years of age and over,
- Individuals who live in personal care homes and other long term care facilities,
- Others at greater risk from seasonal flu and would be expected to benefit the most:
  - Children 6 months to 23 months of age,
  - Individuals from 24 months to 65 years of age with risk conditions for complications from seasonal influenza as per the 2008-2009 National Advisory Committee on Immunization (NACI) recommendations.

**PEOPLE FOR WHOM THE SEASONAL INFLUENZA VACCINE IS DEFERRED FOR NOW:**

- Health care workers, first responders and household contacts of high risk individuals.

The seasonal influenza vaccine program will now begin with a focus primarily on people 65 years of age and over, residents of personal care homes and other long term care facilities, children 6 months to 23 months of age, and individuals from 24 months to 65 years of age with risk conditions for complications from seasonal influenza as per the 2008-2009 NACI recommendations. It should be anticipated that the seasonal influenza vaccine will be recommended for the other eligible Manitobans during or following the pandemic H1N1 vaccine program.

This recommendation supports the need to immunize those most at risk for complications from seasonal influenza as soon as feasible before we shift our prime attention to the pandemic H1N1 vaccine program. While it is unknown when the pandemic H1N1 vaccine will arrive, health care providers should prepare for the possibility that the pandemic H1N1 vaccine could be available in Manitoba as early as mid-October.

This recommendation had also resulted from concerns that were created by the distribution of an unpublished draft research paper that suggested an association between previous seasonal influenza vaccination and an increased risk of pandemic H1N1 disease. Subsequent communications of further analyses of data should reduce much of that concern. Specifically, Canada's Chief Public Health Officer has stated that preliminary research undertaken by the Public Health Agency of Canada "suggests that there is no increased risk of severe H1N1 pandemic disease in those who have received seasonal vaccine."

For updated information on MHHL Influenza Vaccine programs, please visit the Manitoba Government website at: [www.manitoba.ca](http://www.manitoba.ca). For specific public health questions or concerns, health care professionals can always contact a Medical Officer of Health at: 788-8666 (24/7). As an alternative to contacting their own health care provider, clients and patients can get general health information or personal health advice by calling Health Links Info-Santé at: 788-8200 or 1-888-315-9257 (toll free).

Thank you in advance for your cooperation.

Yours sincerely,

*"Original signed by"*

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Chief Public Health Officer