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## H1N1 and Michigan

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## **GUEST EDITORIAL**

### **H1N1 and Michigan**

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The first 2009 pandemic influenza A (H1N1) virus infections were identified in the United States in April 2009 as reported by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC, MMWR, September 18, 2009 / 58(36);1009-1012). The 2009 novel H1N1 Influenza (sometimes called "swine flu") is a new influenza virus causing illness in people. This virus is spreading from person-to-person worldwide, in much the same way that seasonal influenza viruses spread.

In addition and in response to the emergence and spread of the pandemic H1N1 virus, in April 2009 the states and CDC implemented line-listed reporting for cases of novel H1N1 that was added to the CDC's National Influenza Surveillance System that monitors influenza viruses and the geographic spread and level of influenza activity. In May, this system transitioned to include aggregate counts of novel H1N1 influenza cases, hospitalizations, and deaths.

On September 15, 2009, four influenza vaccine manufacturers received approval from the Food and Drug Administration for use of influenza A (H1N1) 2009 monovalent vaccines in the prevention of influenza caused by the 2009 pandemic influenza A (H1N1) virus. CDC's Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices has made recommendations previously for which persons should be the initial targets for immunization with influenza A (H1N1) 2009 monovalent vaccines and issued guidelines on decisions for expansion of vaccination efforts to other population groups. Children aged 6 months--9 years receiving influenza A (H1N1) 2009 monovalent vaccines should receive 2 doses, with doses separated by approximately 4 weeks; persons aged  $\geq 10$  years should receive 1 dose.

The Michigan Department of Community Health (MDCH) has responded promptly to the national recommendations and guidance on preparing in the event of flu pandemic. On August 17 and September 18, the Department released guidance for healthcare providers, laboratory professionals and public health personnel regarding appropriate patients for influenza testing at the MDCH lab and reporting of influenza hospitalizations and deaths. The guidance is available at: <http://www.michigan.gov/h1n1flu>.

Flu symptoms are similar for both seasonal and novel strains:

- A fever in excess of 100 degrees
- Body aches
- Constantly tired
- Dizziness
- Frequent dehydration
- Vomiting



There are several steps people can take on a daily basis to help prevent the spread of germs that cause respiratory illnesses such as the flu:

- Wash hands often with soap and water. If soap and water are not available, use an alcohol-based hand sanitizer
- Cover nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze, and throw the tissue in the trash after you use it.
- Avoid touching eyes, nose or mouth
- Try to avoid close contact with sick people

However, the most effective prevention measure is to get vaccinated. The MDCH encourages people to check with their health care provider or local health department regarding vaccine availability.

More information about flu in Michigan can be found on the MDCH website:  
<http://www.michigan.gov/h1n1flu>.

