

To: All Department of the Interior Employees

From: Laurence I. Broun /s/
Director, Office of Emergency Management

Subject: Message to Employees -2009 H1N1 Influenza Vaccination

Both the H1N1 Flu virus and the regular seasonal influenza viruses are circulating this fall and winter. This year's annual flu season poses the potential to cause significant illness with increased flu-related employee absenteeism, as well as increased numbers of hospitalizations and deaths from both the seasonal flu as well as the H1N1 Flu. Therefore, it is critical to do all you can to protect yourself from getting the flu. **Vaccines are the best tool we have to prevent influenza.** As promised in the [all-employee message of September 10, 2009](#), we are following up to provide you additional information on vaccines.

The H1N1 Flu vaccine is different from the seasonal flu vaccine. Therefore this year, the **Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) is encouraging everyone to get both the seasonal flu and 2009 H1N1 Flu vaccines to be fully protected.**

The 2009 H1N1 vaccine will be available through the same channels as the seasonal flu vaccine. Employees are encouraged to get vaccinated for H1N1 by their healthcare provider or local healthcare system that they normally use to get their seasonal flu vaccine. Additional options may be available through your workplace.

- Metro DC Area - Those DOI employees who work in the DC Metro area will be able to get both their seasonal and 2009 H1N1 vaccine through the DOI Health Unit in the Main Interior Building. Once the H1N1 Flu vaccine is available, additional information will be sent out to DC Area employees providing details on dates/times they can get the 2009 H1N1 vaccine in accordance with the prioritization scheme outlined below.
- Outside of the Metro DC Area – If your workplace normally provides the seasonal flu vaccine, you will be able to get your 2009 H1N1 vaccine there also. (If you are unsure, check with your office's management.) Federal employees in health care and emergency services occupational categories can also obtain the 2009 H1N1 vaccine through the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) and their healthcare facilities around the nation.

The seasonal flu vaccine is available now, and available to everyone. However, the 2009 H1N1 vaccine will be available in limited quantities for the first 2 or 3 weeks. As a result, specific target groups and high-risk sub-groups (outlined below) will receive the first available doses. The prioritization scheme of the 2009 H1N1 vaccine will be based on health risk and -- except for health care workers, emergency medical personnel, and

some daycare providers -- these recommendations will not target specific occupational groups, nor will they provide preferential treatment for Federal workers. After the initial few weeks, the 2009 H1N1 vaccine will be available to all.

The CDC, in coordination with the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices, recommends the H1N1 vaccine to the following groups first because they are at highest risk for disease or complications from this flu:

- Pregnant women
- Persons who live with or provide care for infants less than 6 months old
- Health care and emergency medical services personnel. (Initially, this will be limited to those with direct patient contact.)
- Persons aged 6 months - 24 years, and persons aged 25 - 64 years who have medical conditions that put them at higher risk for influenza-related complications. (Initially, this will be limited to persons 6 months - 4 years, and persons aged 5-18 years with medical conditions that put them at a higher risk for influenza-related complications.)

Depending on the type of vaccine used – flu shots or nasal mist – you may be able to receive vaccinations for the seasonal flu and H1N1 Flu at the same time; ask your provider.

For further information, I encourage you to visit the DOI Office of Emergency Management's 2009 H1N1 Flu website (<http://www.doi.gov/emergency/h1n1>), which is constantly updated to provide links to current guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and from Interior bureaus and offices.