



STATE OF MARYLAND

DHMH

Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene
Mental Hygiene Administration
Spring Grove Hospital Center – Dix Building
55 Wade Avenue – Catonsville, Maryland 21228

Martin O'Malley, Governor – Anthony G. Brown, Lt. Governor – John M. Colmers, Secretary
Brian M. Hepburn, M.D., Executive Director

October 20, 2009

Dear Public Mental Health System (PMHS) Provider,

Due to the widespread distribution of the 2009 H1N1 influenza virus (swine flu), the Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DHMH) is strongly encouraging its citizens to be vaccinated against this highly contagious virus. The H1N1 virus is disproportionately impacting younger people, and, it has resulted in more than 200 hospitalizations and ten deaths in Maryland. As such, the Mental Hygiene Administration (MHA) requests that you encourage your clients to receive the H1N1 vaccine.

The H1N1 vaccine is especially important for members of the priority populations. The priority groups for the first doses of the H1N1 vaccine include: (1) individuals between the ages of 6 months and 24 years; (2) healthcare and EMS workers; (3) pregnant women; (4) adults with underlying medical conditions; and (5) parents or caregivers of children under 6 months of age. Once demand among these groups has been met, the vaccine will be available to the general population.

Please encourage your clients to contact their primary care physician or local health department if they fall into one of the above priority populations. The vaccine is being offered free of charge, and providers will be paid an administration fee by Medicare, Medicaid, and private health plans. DHMH is working with local health departments, health care providers, school-based clinics, federally qualified health centers, and other community partners to deliver the vaccine and monitor the administration of vaccinations.

If you or your clients have any questions or concerns, please visit www.flu.maryland.gov or call 1-877-MDFLU4U.

Sincerely,

Brian Hepburn, M.D.
Executive Director

CC: Core Service Agency Directors
Mary Mastrandrea, ValueOptions
MHA Management Committee
Gail Wowk, MHA
Stephanie Steines, DHMH