TIMELINES AND TARGET GROUPS FOR INFLUENZA VACCINATION

The influenza vaccination is the best protection against influenza and the complications of this disease. However, numerous variables can affect the severity of any flu season, many of which cannot be fully anticipated or prevented. In the event of a vaccine shortage or delay in distribution, the Pennsylvania Department of Health (PADOH) is asking all health care providers for assistance in implementing the updated influenza vaccinations from the Advisory Committee Immunization Practices (ACIP). The purpose of this action is to target initial vaccine supplies to high-risk persons, and promote influenza immunizations throughout the flu season for other individuals.

In the 2001-2002 influenza season, the PADOH recommends the following timelines and target groups for vaccinations:

PRIORITY # 1 – September 1, 2001 to November 30, 2001
Persons at Increased Risk For Complications
• persons aged ≥ 65 years;
• residents of nursing homes and other chronic-care facilities that house persons of any age who have chronic medical conditions;
• adults and children who have chronic disorders of the pulmonary or cardiovascular systems, including asthma;
• adults and children who have required medical follow-up or hospitalization during the preceding year because of chronic metabolic diseases (including diabetes mellitus), renal dysfunction, hemoglobinopathies, or immunosuppression (including immunosuppression caused by medications or by human immunodeficiency virus);
• children and teenagers (aged 6 months to 18 years) who are receiving long-term aspirin therapy and therefore might be at risk for developing Reyes syndrome after influenza infection; and
• women who will be in the second or third trimester of pregnancy during the influenza season.

PRIORITY # 2 – October 15, 2001 to December 15, 2001
Persons Who Can Transmit Influenza to Those at High Risk
• physicians, nurses, and other personnel in both hospital and outpatient-care settings, including emergency response workers
• employees of nursing homes and chronic-care facilities who have contact with patients or residents
• employees of assisted living and other residences for persons in groups at risk
• persons who provide home care to persons in groups at high risk
• household members (including children) of persons in groups at high risk

Persons Aged 50-64 Years
• Vaccination is recommended for persons aged 50-64 years because this group has an increased prevalence of persons with high-risk conditions. Persons aged 50-64 years without high-risk conditions also receive benefit from vaccination in the form of decreased rates of influenza illness, decreased work absenteeism, and decreased need for medical visits and medication, including antibiotics.

Influenza Vaccination Campaigns

PRIORITY # 3 – December 1, 2001 to February 15, 2002
General Population
• Persons who wish to reduce the likelihood of becoming ill with influenza

*The recommendations are subject to the availability of influenza vaccine supplies

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Robert S Zimmerman, Jr. Secretary of Health
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