Pandemic H1N1 in Los Angeles County

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Presentation Overview

• Pandemic H1N1: what is it and what are its symptoms?
• What is the status of Pandemic H1N1 in L.A. County?
• What is Public Health doing in response to Pandemic H1N1?
• Key public messages: prevention and treatment
• Who are the priority groups for the H1N1 vaccine?
• How are the H1N1 vaccines being distributed and administered in L.A. County?
• Where can I go for more information?
What is Pandemic H1N1?

- New **human** flu virus causing illness in people, spreads from person-to-person like the common flu

- Symptoms like the common flu:
  - High fever, dry cough, sore throat, headache, body aches, nasal congestion, chills, tiredness and weakness, diarrhea, vomiting

- Virus spreads through:
  - Large respiratory droplets from infected person, close contact with sick individual
Pandemic H1N1 status in the US

*This map indicates geographic spread and does not measure the severity of influenza activity.*
What is the status of Pandemic H1N1 in Los Angeles County?

• During week 38 (September 20-September 26), influenza activity in California was upgraded to widespread.
  – Remains widespread through present week

• New ILI (influenza-like illness) outbreaks reported in Los Angeles County
  – Week 39 (Sept 27 – Oct 4): 13 (11 in elementary schools)

• Majority of U.S. and L.A. County cases have been mild to moderate
  – Most cases recovered without complications or special medical treatment
What is the status of Pandemic H1N1 in Los Angeles County?

• Reported number of cases do not reflect actual number of cases
  – Individuals in outpatient settings are no longer tested for presence of the virus, due to the mild nature of the disease among most people and the cost associated with testing

• Laboratory testing is limited to individuals with serious H1N1 illness, including hospitalized patients, and those at high risk for complications

• Los Angeles County H1N1 deaths (April 3 – Nov. 4, 2009):
  • Deaths: 75
  • Not all fatal cases were admitted to the ICU
What is DPH doing in response to Pandemic H1N1?

• Activated the **Incident Command System (ICS)**.
  – This structure will allow for the rapid deployment of resources and emergency planning in response to the challenges presented by pandemic H1N1

• Containing further spread of disease
  – Offering H1N1 flu vaccination clinics

• Investigating possible cases and illness clusters

• Monitoring severe cases by tracking patient visits and hospitalizations
What is DPH doing in response to Pandemic H1N1?

• Assuring effective use of national, state, and local resources
• Sustaining infrastructure, essential services, and the economy
• Ensuring effective risk communication (e.g., framing flu as an annual public health problem with substantial health impact):
  - 36,000 deaths per year
  - 200,000 hospitalizations per year
  - Lost work/school days
  - Overwhelmed medical care systems
Pandemic H1N1: prevention

• Get a seasonal flu shot and keep immunizations up-to-date
• Get Pandemic H1N1 flu shots if you are in any of the priority groups
• Stay home for 24 hours after fever ends
• Wash your hands with soap and water
• Cover coughs and sneezes
• Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth
• Practice healthy habits like:
  – Eating healthy food
  – Getting enough sleep
  – Exercise to maintain a strong body that’s able to fight germs
Pandemic H1N1: treatment

• Most treatment like the normal seasonal flu:
  – Stay at home when sick
    – Avoid getting others sick
    – Avoid overcrowding emergency rooms
  – Drink lots of fluids
    – Keep body hydrated
  – Get plenty of rest
    – Stay at home until 24 hours after fever ends
Pandemic H1N1: treatment

• Most people do not need medication to get better
  – Antivirals (Tamiflu® or Relenza®) do not guarantee flu will go away or be less contagious
  – Over the counter medicine relieves symptoms but does not make you less contagious
  – DO NOT give aspirin to children or teenagers for flu symptoms
  – Antibiotic medication is not recommended for the treatment of Pandemic H1N1
  – Treatment is for those who are hospitalized or immune-compromised:
    • Pregnant women,
    • Infants,
    • Elderly,
    • People with HIV, cancer, heart or lung disease
What are the facts about flu shots?

• You cannot get the flu from the flu shot

• Once you get the flu shot it takes time before it works

• The flu shot doesn’t cure all illnesses
Thimerosal and safety

- Thimerosal is added to vaccines to keep them germ-free while in the vial

- Vaccines that contain thimerosal are safe and can be given to children and young adults
  - Ages 6 months to 24 years

- The amount of preservative in vaccines is safe
  - Extensive scientific research has found no link between thimerosal and complications (including autism)
H1N1 vaccine: monitoring safety

- The ingredients in the pandemic H1N1 flu vaccine and the process for making and testing it are similar to seasonal flu vaccine, **which is very safe**.
- Providers asked to promptly and accurately report clinically adverse effects that occur following vaccination
- Report to Vaccine Adverse Event Reporting System (VAERS) – a US vaccine safety surveillance system co-managed by the CDC and FDA

Three ways to report to VAERS:

1) Submit online via a secure website at [http://vaers.hhs.gov/esub/index#Online](http://vaers.hhs.gov/esub/index#Online)
2) Fax a completed VAERS form to (877) 721-0366, or
3) Mail a completed VAERS form to VAERS, P.O. Box 1100, Rockville, MD 20849-1100
Who are the priority groups to receive the Pandemic H1N1 vaccine?

• **Priority groups include:**
  – Pregnant women
  – People who live with or care for children > 6 months of age
  – Health care and emergency medical services personnel
  – Persons between the ages of 6 months - 24 years
  – People from ages 25 - 64 that have chronic health disorders or compromised immune systems

• Los Angeles County contains 5.5 million residents who fall into the priority group
  – DPH, working with community clinic partners, plans to vaccinate a portion of the priority group population
  – Majority of vaccinations administered in LA County will be provided by the private sector
How is the H1N1 vaccine being administered?

• There are two ways to administer the vaccine
  – The "flu shot"
    • An inactivated vaccine that is given with a needle
    • Both H1N1 and seasonal flu shots can be administered at the same time
  – The “FluMist” nasal-spray
    • A vaccine made with live, weakened flu viruses that does not cause the flu
    • H1N1 and seasonal flu nasal-spray cannot be administered at the same time
H1N1 vaccine distribution in L.A. County

• H1N1 vaccine will be available in the same ways that seasonal flu vaccine is offered:
  • Doctors’ offices
  • Retail settings
  • Pharmacies
  • Workplaces
  • Community vaccinators

• Additionally, DPH has been conducting mass vaccination clinics, known as Points of Dispensing (PODs), all over the County for the public
  – Friday 10/23 through Sunday 11/8: DPH provided 108,000 vaccinations at 69 clinics
  – 1,800 – 2,200 vaccinations per site
H1N1 vaccine distribution in L.A. County*

Location of Clinics: October 23 – November 13

* Not pictured on map: Acton, Quartz Hill, and Littlerock (all completed)
† Scheduled for Nov. 14th or Nov. 15th
Scenes from Los Angeles County DPH flu clinics (PODs)
Scenes from Los Angeles County DPH flu clinics (PODs)
H1N1 vaccine: availability and doses

• Vaccine available to LA County health care providers who ordered through CalPanFlu website: www.CalPanFlu.org

• Health care providers who ordered pandemic H1N1 vaccine through CalPanFlu website should receive their vaccine by mid-November

• Pandemic H1N1 vaccine anticipated doses:
  – **One dose** for those ages 10 years and up
  – **Two doses** for those ages 6 months to 9 years
    • It is anticipated that those who get the first shot will have to wait a month before getting the second shot
Current vaccine shortage

- Current demand for H1N1 vaccine exceeds local and national supply
  - Manufacturing delays
- Communities nationwide don’t have enough H1N1 vaccine
  - LA County included
  - Hospitals, private doctor’s offices, and local health departments do not have as much vaccine as expected or originally planned for
- As of Nov. 10th, 810,000 doses have been received or are on order for LA County:
  - 538,000 (66%) directed to private providers
  - 272,000 (34%) directed to DPH for PODs
  - Additional 157,000 sent by the State to local Kaiser facilities
More vaccine is on the way…

• More H1N1 vaccine will become available in upcoming weeks
  – Local community clinics and doctor’s offices will have supplies soon

• Please help make sure that those most in need of vaccine can get it
  – If you are NOT in the target groups, please wait until more vaccine is available before getting vaccinated
  – Remember flu season usually peaks in the beginning of the year

• 11 community health center partners (26 total sites) starting to add H1N1 vaccination services
Los Angeles County flu clinic challenges

• High demand + limited supply =
  – Some Public Health vaccine clinics forced to close earlier than expected, people turned away
  – Screening for vaccine types slower than expected

• In response DPH has:
  – Deployed more screeners to sites and started screening clients in line
  – Provided additional information on site to ensure awareness of shortage situation and priority groups
DPH next steps

• We are working on the following improvements to our H1N1 response:
  – Strengthen outreach to identify providers serving underserved sectors of target groups
  – Increase outreach to those with poor access to health care
  – Launch our broad media campaign
  • We have delayed the release of the campaign due to significant imbalance between vaccine supply and demand
What employers can do to minimize the impact of H1N1

• Urge your employees who are in the priority groups to go to their regular source of care to get vaccinated as soon as possible
  – Employees not in priority groups should get vaccinated when vaccine becomes more widely available
  – An immunized workforce will minimize the absenteeism in your workplace caused by flu

• Keep shared equipment and workstations (e.g. cash registers, computer keyboards) as clean as possible between shifts to minimize spread of germs

• Send sick employees home
What employers can do to minimize the impact of H1N1

• Post flu prevention tips around the worksite
• Provide support for employees who get sick to stay out of the workplace
  – Support sick staff to stay at home and rest
  – Allow staff who are recovering from being sick to telecommute
  – Provide self-care resources to sick staff
• Urge employees to develop child care contingency plans in case a child gets sick
• Find H1N1-related resources for businesses at: http://cdc.gov/h1n1flu/business/
Key prevention messages to remember

• **Get** a seasonal flu shot and keep immunizations up-to-date
• **Get** Pandemic H1N1 flu shots if you are in any of the priority groups
• **Stay** home for 24 hours after fever ends
• **Wash** your hands with soap and water
• **Cover** coughs and sneezes
• **Avoid** touching your eyes, nose and mouth
• **Practice** healthy habits like:
  – Eating healthy food
  – Getting enough sleep
  – Exercise to maintain a strong body that’s able to fight germs
For more information

- Los Angeles County:
  - County of Los Angeles Department of Public Health http://www.publichealth.lacounty.gov/
  - Call 2-1-1 from any phone if you need help finding medical care

- California:
  - California Department of Public Health
    - 1-888-865-0564
    - www.cdph.ca.gov

- United States:
  - Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
    - 1-800-CDC-INFO (1-800-232-4636)
    - www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu
Special Thanks to…

• Cities hosting the flu clinics, especially the City of Los Angeles
• Community health center partners
• LA County Department of Health Services
• Department of Public Health staff
Questions