



YUKON-KUSKOKWIM HEALTH CORPORATION

"Working Together to Achieve Excellent Health"

YKHC Press Release

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H1N1 and seasonal flu vaccines have arrived here in the YK Delta. Bethel Family Clinic, Public Health Nursing, and the Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta Regional Hospital and village clinics are in the process of mass distribution and working together to exhaust the supply of both H1N1 and Seasonal Flu vaccines over the next couple of weeks. A Mass Dispensing Clinic is scheduled to take place in two Bethel locations on November 7th from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. at Yute Airlines and the Armory gymnasium (Ayaprun/Kilbuck).

"It is expected there will be a sufficient supply of vaccines for individuals and families who wish to receive both shots," said YKHC Infection control nurse, Lori Pruitt-Chikoyak. "Even though we have seen very small shipments of vaccines over the past several weeks, and focused strictly on priority groups, we anticipate having plenty of vaccine available for the MDC event."

Dr. Daniel Hartman, clinical specialist for the Mass Dispensing Clinic and longtime Delta health care provider, added "the only way to prevent continued spread of the varied types of flu we have seen at the hospital is through vaccination—and of course healthy habits, coughing into tissue or elbow, frequent hand-washing and staying home if you're sick. We are striving to reach what's called a 'herd immunity,' which means we want everyone who works with high risk or priority groups to receive both vaccinations."

"Although YKHC has made extensive efforts in conjunction with numerous departments and village operations staff to treat front-line health care workers and community health aides, we need to get more people vaccinated," said Immunization Coordinator Kathleen Stanton. YKHC is encouraging all of its employees to receive both shots, and for those who choose not to, they will be asked to sign a declination form.

"Just like the rest of the country, the YK Delta is not exempt in what appears to have been a delay in receiving the vaccinations, but we are pleased with the recent shipment of H1N1 and seasonal flu vaccines," said Lori Pruitt YKHC's Infection Control nurse. Now we can focus on getting more of our hospital staff vaccinated, (including) front-line medical and



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emergency service workers, and individuals and patients who work closely with children." Public Health Nurses have already visited Bethel schools this week for children, a priority group, who wish to get their shots, and for parents who have signed the necessary consent forms.

"Historically speaking, if we can demonstrate that we have dispensed our supply to the local population who wishes to receive the shots throughout the Delta, is what determines if we will be sent more quantities of vaccination sent to us in the future. Most everyone is aware that our flu season lasts pretty long out here on the Delta," said YKHC spokesperson Donna Bach.

Because this is considered a novel H1N1 pandemic by the World Health Organization, many people do not have any type of natural resistance to this type of flu. If you are sick and are experiencing the following symptoms such as: shortness of breath, pain or pressure in chest, sudden dizziness or irritability in children, or if flu-like symptoms improve but then return with fever and worse cough, if you are unable to keep hydrated, or have severe or persistent vomiting--it is advised you see a health provider right away.

If you have mild flu-like symptoms it is advised you stay away from public places, rest, drink lots of water until your symptoms have been gone for 24 hours. If people are not able to make it to the MDC, YKHC plans to host a vaccine dispensing table in the Bethel Hospital front lobby starting Monday November 9th from 3 to 8 p.m., 7 days a week, for two weeks, or until the supplies are exhausted to dispense both the seasonal and H1N1 vaccinations.

For more information about the vaccinations, questions you may have about priority groups, you can visit the Centers for Disease Control website at www.cdc.gov or locally, you can call the H1N1 hotline at 1-800-478-3321 ext 6644.