



NEWS RELEASE

ALABAMA DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH

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Health department continues efforts to maximize flu vaccine delivery to high-risk individuals

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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The Alabama Department of Public Health is distributing an additional 35,000 doses of influenza vaccine to county health departments and has established an influenza vaccine ordering system for healthcare providers across the state.

The health department has administered more than 140,000 doses of influenza vaccine this flu season to persons at high risk of complications. Over the last few months the private medical community has vaccinated over 300,000 individuals.

The department has coordinated orders for 74,000 doses of vaccine which are being distributed to nursing homes, hospitals, assisted living facilities and other health care providers. Alabama nursing homes and assisted living facilities have begun receiving influenza vaccine already.

The health department is also identifying health care providers who may purchase approximately 54,000 doses of adult vaccine and 22,400 doses of pediatric vaccine. Of these doses, 46,300 will be sent in January.

Dr. Donald Williamson, state health officer, said, "Any unobligated doses available before Christmas will either be allocated to providers in the private sector or will be purchased by the department to meet unmet need. Doses which do not arrive until January will be allocated based upon need and the status of influenza at that time."

The Health Department continues its surveillance of influenza-like illness and confirmed influenza to monitor disease activity. Fortunately, there have been no confirmed influenza cases in Alabama yet this season and it appears that this will be a normal flu season. The additional doses of vaccine are being made available to the private sector by Aventis in an effort to compensate for the loss of vaccine manufactured by Chiron. The health care facilities will be responsible for the purchase of the vaccine. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention is working with state and local health officials to assure that all available vaccine is allocated as fairly as possible across the nation to protect the most vulnerable citizens.

Priority groups for vaccination with inactivated influenza vaccine remain:

- all children aged 6-23 months,
- adults aged 65 years or older,
- persons aged 2-64 years with underlying chronic medical conditions,

- all women who will be pregnant during influenza season,
- residents of nursing homes and long-term care facilities,
- children 6 months-18 years of age on chronic aspirin therapy,
- healthcare workers with direct patient care, and out-of-home caregivers and household contacts of children aged less than 6 months.

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