



NEWS RELEASE

ALABAMA DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH

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Get vaccinated for influenza; it's not too late

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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While the influenza season has not ended, most Alabamians still have not received the 2009 H1N1 vaccine. The Alabama Department of Public Health urges everyone to get the H1N1 influenza vaccine now that the entire population is eligible and in advance of a possible future wave of influenza activity.

"Influenza is unpredictable, and we want to the public to be protected," said Dr. Donald Williamson, state health officer. "We continue to see disease in persons in all age groups, including otherwise healthy young people. H1N1 influenza vaccine is now abundantly available, and it's not too late for Alabamians of all ages to be immunized."

The H1N1 2009 influenza vaccine has been sent to health care providers, pharmacies and health departments in every county of Alabama. H1N1 influenza immunizations also are being given to school children throughout the state. School-based clinics are currently providing a single dose of influenza vaccine to children ages 10 and older in injectable form. A second dose of nasal mist vaccine will be provided to children up to age 10.

Vaccination is the single best way to reduce the health impact of influenza. The H1N1 vaccine is produced the same way as the seasonal influenza vaccine is made, and getting immunized is safer than getting the flu. Alabama has recorded 40 documented influenza-associated deaths since July 2009.

For information about influenza immunization clinic dates, times and locations in your area visit www.adph.org, click on the health department's Facebook page, call the toll-free flu hotline at 877-377-7285, or contact your health care provider or county health department.

No fees are charged for the H1N1 influenza vaccine itself, but health care providers such as physicians and pharmacists may charge an administration fee that most insurance plans cover. The vaccine is offered totally free at county health departments for anyone without insurance.