

News Release

Government of Canada Issues Guidance on H1N1 Influenza Vaccine Sequencing

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

(OTTAWA) – Canada’s Chief Public Health Officer, Dr. David Butler-Jones, today issued guidance for provinces and territories on H1N1 vaccine sequencing.

“Canadians should know that we will have enough vaccine for everyone who needs and wants to be immunized,” said Dr. Butler-Jones. “Our focus in the coming weeks and months is to ensure that those who need it most get it first.”

The guidance identifies groups and individuals that will benefit most from immunization, and those who care for them. These include:

- people with chronic medical conditions under the age of 65;
- pregnant women;
- children six months to under five years of age;
- people living in remote and isolated settings or communities;
- health care workers involved in pandemic response or who deliver essential health services;
- household contacts and caregivers of individuals who are at high risk, and who cannot be immunized (such as infants under six months of age or people with weakened immune systems); and
- populations otherwise identified as high risk.

These groups are not listed in priority sequence. Provinces and territories are expected to use the guidance for planning purposes and will interpret it based on local circumstances and realities.

The guidance has been reviewed and is supported by public health officials from across Canada. It is based on the latest scientific evidence on H1N1 virus characteristics, current information on the H1N1 vaccine and Canada’s Pandemic Influenza Plan for the Health Sector. The guidance could be adjusted as new information about the H1N1 virus and vaccine effectiveness becomes available.



“Public health authorities from across Canada are working together to protect Canadians, and I welcome this latest contribution to our efforts,” said Health Minister Leona Aglukkaq, who will present the guidance document to her colleagues for discussion at a meeting of federal, provincial and territorial health ministers on September 17 in Winnipeg. “I would like to thank the Public Health Agency of Canada for leading the sequencing effort.”

The document also identifies others who would benefit from immunization:

- children 5 to 18 years of age;
- first responders (e.g. police and firefighters);
- poultry and swine workers;
- adults 19 to 64 years of age; and
- adults aged 65 years of age or over.

“The approach we have taken is balanced, objective, and reflects the best available scientific and technical information that is currently available,” said Dr. Butler-Jones. “I encourage all Canadians to get vaccinated against H1N1, as this is our best defence against the spread of the virus.”

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