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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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NEW JERSEY DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND SENIOR SERVICES OPENS H1N1 VACCINATIONS TO THE GENERAL PUBLIC

The New Jersey Department of Health and Senior Services (NJDHSS) notified H1N1 vaccine providers yesterday that they may offer the H1N1 vaccine to anyone who wishes to get the vaccine. NJDHSS made this decision based on several factors, including the amount of vaccine that the state has received has increased to 2.25 million doses and that the H1N1 vaccine demand among individuals within target groups has decreased. In addition, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recently recommended that states consider increasing vaccine access to the general public. The CDC has projected that there will be enough vaccine for all who wish to receive it.

Freeholder Deputy Director Gerry P. Little, Liaison to the Ocean County Health Department (OCHD), said that the OCHD has held 19 H1N1 vaccination clinics, including both injectable and intranasal flu mist, from the time it first received vaccine in October. Clinics have been held at both the Health Department and at school sites throughout all of Ocean County for easier access to the vaccinations by residents. Little stated, "The OCHD has given 10,426 injectable vaccinations and 951 intranasal vaccinations, totaling 11,377. The OCHD followed the CDC priority groups and still have the option to schedule clinics specifically for individuals in target groups at greatest risk of complications from H1N1."

Daniel Regenye, OCHD Assistant Public Health Coordinator, said that administrators and staff at the OCHD will be participating in a teleconference with the NJDHSS today regarding the expansion of the vaccine guidelines. Regenye stated, "We have been in touch with providers who registered with the NJDHSS to be vaccinators and have offered vaccine to them. Our staff continues to meet internally and with schools, etc. that have offered to be vaccination sites to determine dates, etc. to offer this vaccine to the public. Once regional H1N1 public clinic dates are established, they will be distributed to the media and posted on our website.

(PRH1N1general public/page2)

Leslie Terjesen, OCHD Public Information Officer, said, “Vaccination against H1N1 is the most effective tool to prevent H1N1. The OCHD still reminds people to wash their hands, cover their coughs and sneezes, stay home when sick, try to avoid sick people, and clean commonly used surfaces in your home or worksite with a disinfectant that contains virus-killing properties.”

The OCHD will continue to post its H1N1 clinic sites on its website at www.ochd.org and on the NJDHSS’s Find-A-Flu shot locator at www.nj.gov/health or you can call the NJDHSS H1N1 Hotline at 1-866-321-9751 or the Ocean County Health Department at 732-341-9700, ext. 7791.

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