



# PUBLIC HEALTH BYTES

Henrico Health Department's Newsletter

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Working in partnership  
with the citizens of  
Henrico County to create  
the conditions for health.

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## **Pandemic Flu - ALERT PHASE WHO: 6**

### **Recent Information on Rapid Influenza Diagnostic Tests (RIDT) for 2009 Pandemic Influenza A H1N1**

When testing patients for suspected influenza infection, it is important to remember that commercially available RIDTs cannot distinguish between influenza A subtypes. Data from CDC and the state lab indicate that 2009 Pandemic Influenza A H1N1 is the predominant strain in our community. We are not seeing seasonal influenza strains in the area at this time.

The September 25, 2009 issue of the MMWR reported on the performance of RIDT in predicting PCR-confirmed pandemic H1N1 infection during an outbreak that occurred in two schools in May 2009. Positive RIDT results performed well in predicting PCR-confirmed pandemic H1N1 infection (positive predictive value: 92%) but negative RIDT tests did not accurately predict the absence of infection (negative predictive value: 32%).

Based on these findings, clinical judgment is critical when diagnosing a patient with influenza. **A negative RIDT result does not rule out pandemic H1N1 infection in patients who present with flu-like symptoms and should not be used for management of patients with possible H1N1 infection or for infection control decisions.**

If you would like to pursue H1N1 PCR testing for a patient, Quest Diagnostics and LabCorp offer this service. However, testing is expensive and is not being covered by most health insurance companies.

Sources: [http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/guidance/rapid\\_testing.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/guidance/rapid_testing.htm)  
<http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/mm5837a1.htm>

### **Register for the Virginia Immunization Information System (VIIS)**

If you plan to provide the 2009 Pandemic Influenza A H1N1 vaccination to your patients, it is strongly suggested that you register your site with the VIIS. Registration allows you to track the number of H1N1 doses given in your practice and provides valuable information to the Health Department for surveillance purposes. Please refer to the following link to register or for additional information:

<http://www.vdh.virginia.gov/Epidemiology/Immunization/viis/index.htm>.

## **Henrico Health District Staff Update**

Henrico Health District has added additional staff to meet the challenges of the Fall 2009 Pandemic Influenza A H1N1 vaccine campaign:

- Jessica Watson: H1N1 Response Specialist
- Katie Rotelli: H1N1 School/Clinic Liaison
- Lisa Gardner: H1N1 Support Specialist
- Brenda Millirons: H1N1 Vaccination Operations Chief

Also, please welcome our new District Epidemiologist, Angela West. Angela comes to Henrico from Crater Health District.

Lastly, Mike Magner, the District Planner, will be leaving Henrico Health District for the Central Region Planner position, effective Oct 10, 2009.

## **Antiviral Guidelines for Physicians**

The September 11, 2009 issue of the MMWR reported that the initial tests of the pandemic H1N1 virus found it susceptible to neuraminidase inhibitors, including Tamiflu, and resistant to adamantanes. However, as of September 4, 2009, 9 cases of resistance to Tamiflu have been reported in the U.S. In addition, sporadic cases of Tamiflu resistance have been reported from areas outside the U.S. The CDC continues to recommend that influenza antivirals should be reserved only for individuals at high-risk of complications from influenza infection. These individuals include:

- Children younger than 2 years old;
- Persons aged 65 years or older
- Pregnant women
- Persons of any age with certain chronic medical or immunosuppressive conditions;
- Persons younger than 19 years of age who are receiving long-term aspirin therapy.

If treatment is warranted, it should be initiated within the first 48 hours of symptom onset. In general, prophylaxis is not recommended but may be considered on a case by case basis.

Tamiflu Oral Suspension for pediatric patients is in short supply; however, Roche expects it to be available by December 2009. Pharmacies can compound an oral suspension for pediatric patients upon request.

The Health Department has a cache of Tamiflu for patients who are indigent or have no insurance. If you have a patient that fits these criteria and requires Tamiflu for treatment, please contact the Health Department so that we may make arrangements to fill the prescription.

## **Medical Reserve Corps**

### **Volunteer Recruitment Effort:**

The Henrico MRC is still seeking volunteers in support of its H1N1 School based and general clinics. Please see <http://www.co.henrico.va.us/health/mrc.html> for more information or contact Augustine Doe at 804-501-4663.

### **Upcoming MRC Training Events/Exercises:**

October 15: Mass Vaccination/Point of Dispensing Training To Participate please contact Augustine Doe at 804-501-4643 or [HenricoMRC@vdh.virginia.gov](mailto:HenricoMRC@vdh.virginia.gov) for more information.

## **Prepared by Henrico Health District:**

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|-------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| William R. Nelson, MD   | Acting Co-Health Director         |
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| Michael K. Magner, MPH  | District Emergency Planner        |
| Augustine Doe, MHSA     | District MRC Coordinator          |
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