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INQUIRY CENTER OPEN ON COLUMBUS DAY TO ANSWER QUESTIONS ABOUT THE NOVEL H1N1 FLU

(RICHMOND, Va.)— In response to an increased number of calls about the novel H1N1 flu virus, the Virginia Department of Health Inquiry Center will remain open with regular hours, 8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., on Monday, October 12.

The toll-free number is 1-877-ASK-VDH3 (1-877-275-8343).

“We want to make sure we are available to answer questions,” said Suzi Silverstein, Education and Training Director. “While it is a holiday for some people, we are continuing to ensure that information is available to the public.”

As shipments of novel H1N1 influenza vaccine continue to arrive around the state, calls to the Inquiry Center are increasing. Staying open during the holiday will allow Virginians an opportunity to get accurate information about their concerns.

“About 70 percent of the calls are about the vaccine, when it will be available and where to get it,” Silverstein said.

As of Thursday, 88,200 doses of novel H1N1 vaccine had been made available in Virginia. The vaccine is being sent to local health departments, hospitals and primary care providers with the initial focus on vaccinating health care workers and EMS workers.

Calls to the Inquiry Center, which opened in April, have more than doubled in recent weeks.

The Inquiry Center will also answer questions submitted by email to PHIC@vdh.virginia.gov.

For more information on the novel H1N1 flu virus, go online to the Virginia Department of Health website at <http://www.vdh.virginia.gov> or the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) website at <http://www.cdc.gov>.