

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**For More Information Contact**

Jane Pratt, (804) 864-8070, [jane.pratt@vdh.virginia.gov](mailto:jane.pratt@vdh.virginia.gov)

Melodie Martin, (804) 864-7541, [melodie.martin@vdh.virginia.gov](mailto:melodie.martin@vdh.virginia.gov)

**MORE THAN A QUARTER OF VIRGINIANS VACCINATED AGAINST H1N1**

*State Health Commissioner commends response to flu pandemic by public, private sectors*

(RICHMOND, Va.)— State Health Commissioner Karen Remley, M.D., MBA, announced today that through January more than 26 percent of Virginia’s population has been vaccinated against H1N1 influenza virus, according to an interim report released by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). This compares favorably with vaccination rates for that time period of 23.9 percent for the national median and 23 percent for the region that includes Virginia, Delaware, the District of Columbia, Maryland, Pennsylvania and West Virginia.

The Virginia Department of Health (VDH) headed up the vaccination effort, combining the resources of both the private sector and that of the state’s local public health departments. More than 3,000 private doctor’s offices, hospitals, pharmacies, clinics and retail outlets have participated in getting H1N1 vaccine out to Virginians in a historic partnership.

Nearly 40 percent of Virginia’s children between the ages of 6 months and 17 years have received the H1N1 vaccine.

“VDH’s strategy of concentrating on reaching school-aged children – one of the most susceptible age groups to this new strain of virus – really made a difference,” Dr. Remley said. “We are especially thankful to those schools and families that supported our school-based vaccination efforts. We are also very grateful for our many strong partnerships with the medical community and with the many volunteers who worked tirelessly to vaccinate those in high-risk groups and all other segments of the population.”

Virginia experienced two major waves of H1N1 influenza activity, the largest and most recent in October. In Virginia, 37 deaths – including three children – associated with documented H1N1 infection were reported to VDH. It is estimated that about one-fifth of the population nationwide has been infected with this new influenza virus. The H1N1 flu continues to circulate in Virginia among unvaccinated vulnerable children and adults.

Looking ahead, VDH recommends that anyone still unvaccinated get an H1N1 flu vaccination this spring while supplies of free vaccine are still available through local health departments. That action should also provide a “jump start” for next fall’s flu season.

For more information, including charts illustrating H1N1 vaccination rates released by the CDC, visit the VDH Web site at [www.vdh.virginia.gov](http://www.vdh.virginia.gov). The public may also call the VDH Inquiry Center toll-free at 1-877-ASK-VDH3. ##