

Current Influenza Vaccine Supply Situation Recorded Information Line – 10/07/04

Due to the current situation regarding the influenza vaccine supply, the Centers for Disease Control and the New York State Department of Health are assessing the situation in New York State and developing strategies to protect those residents who are at the highest risk of complications from the flu.

The Broome County Health Department and the Broome County medical community are working with the New York State Department of Health to assess the status of flu vaccine in our community. As a county, we want to insure that our most vulnerable residents are protected during this flu season.

At this point, the Centers for Disease Control and the New York State Department of Health have provided interim recommendations for priority groups for influenza vaccine.

The following priority groups for vaccination with inactivated influenza vaccine this season are considered to be of equal importance and are:

- All children aged 6 – 23 months;
- Adults aged 65 years or older;
- Persons aged 2 – 64 years with underlying chronic medical conditions;
- All women who will be pregnant during the influenza season;
- Residents of nursing homes and long-term care facilities;
- Children aged 6 months – 18 years on chronic aspirin therapy;
- Health-care workers involved in direct patient care; and out-of-home caregivers and household contacts of children aged less than 6 months.

If you are in one of these priority groups, please wait to call your primary care provider until the New York State Department of Health has issued flu vaccine supply guidelines for hospitals, long-term care facilities, home health agencies, primary care providers, health departments and other community agencies.

If you are not included in one of these priority groups, you may be asked to forego or defer vaccination due to the urgent vaccine supply situation.

We are asking residents to be patient and understanding while the federal, state and local situation is resolved.

In the meantime, there are precautions people can take to protect themselves from being exposed to cold and flu viruses:

Cover your mouth when you cough, either with a tissue or cough into your sleeve; not into your hand; Wash your hands after coughing or sneezing. You can wash hands with warm water and soap or use alcohol-based hand cleaner. Parents need to teach their children these good habits.

The vaccine from the manufacturer Chiron has not been distributed at all in this country, so any vaccine that will be provided is safe.

Flu Clinics that were scheduled in the community are temporarily on hold until we have a better awareness of the vaccine supply in the region. Please follow the news and you are welcome to check back to the website or the Recorded Information Line at 778-3911, option 1, for updates. As we have more information we will provide it to the public.