



National Influenza Vaccine Summit

Influenza Activity Spotlights

Tuesday, November 10, 2009

Issue #4

Professional Medical Organizations

Please disseminate widely to all of your members.

1. **New ALA FLu Clinic Locator!!**

The American Lung Association (ALA) has entered into a partnership with Google to provide functionality to clinic providers and those seeking vaccination for both seasonal and 2009 H1N1 influenza. With Maxim Health Systems' assistance, Google is rebuilding the Flu Clinic Locator (FCL) and adding the capability to offer H1N1 influenza vaccine clinic information as well as the traditional seasonal influenza vaccine clinic information. In addition, clinic administrators can now upload information for multiple clinics at one time -- a function many influenza clinic providers have requested in recent years. On the consumer side of the FCL, the clinic display will be enhanced by utilizing Google Maps.

The FCL will continue to be an ALA program. The ALA will also continue to manage the agreement process and relationships with clinic administrators. ALA has also been working closely with the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and the White House Office to make sure that information collected from Summit partners and delivered to the public fits in with their strategies. They will be assisting the Summit in going forward, not only to gather additional clinic information, especially related to H1N1 influenza vaccine, but also to raise public awareness of this newly available resource.

We have worked with Google to make the transition from the current FCL to the new FCL as simple and straightforward as possible for clinic administrators. While currently loaded clinic information will not have to be re-entered, there are a few steps necessary to gain access to that information. Once in, the new system administrators will be able to change existing clinics, add new clinics and address H1N1 vaccine availability in both cases.

We are very grateful to Maxim Health Systems for their many years of partnership with us and service to the American public. This year's FCL had over 1.5 million clinics listed as of November 3 and has been a significant resource to the immunization community. We are excited to be working with Google on the new platform and expect that the new processes and functions they bring to the FCL will have a significant impact on this year's vaccine program, particularly with regard to H1N1 vaccine.

As the nation's leading lung health organization, the American Lung Association joins the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in taking an active and aggressive stance on encouraging both the public and healthcare professionals to help expand immunization against seasonal influenza and to address H1N1 influenza. The new platform will certainly allow us to better inform the public about the availability of influenza clinics and therefore help us all reach our collective immunization goals.

Launching the New Locator and What You Need to Do to Prepare

Getting helpful clinic information on the new locator will depend on having accurate and comprehensive data. For this reason we are enlisting any help you can provide with assisting providers in your area to submit their clinic information for the locator. We also want to make the transition process as expeditious as possible. There are two options for administrators:

- a. Wait until the transition to the new site is complete which should only take a few days. At that time administrators can go in and enter new clinics or edit their current information manually, using the interface which closely follows the one they have been using. A link to this new platform is forthcoming.
- b. Fill out a [spreadsheet](#) and send it to flucliniclocator@lungusa.org along with their Gmail username (see below). One advantage to doing this is that updated clinic information will be in the system already when it becomes public within a few days. This would also be a preferred method for new administrators since we can potentially populate the new locator ahead of launch. They will need to sign a contract just like in previous years except the agreement is now with the American Lung Association. Once the contract is available, administrators will need to send signed contracts to the American Lung Association. Even though this is putting the cart a bit before the horse, we need to move as expeditiously as possible.

Note that while the new platform will allow an administrator to upload files (in the same format as the spreadsheet), the upload feature will take a few extra days to prepare. This means that initially if an administrator wishes to submit a file instead of manually adding/editing, it will be by emailing the file to the American Lung Association as above.

All an administrator has to do is set up a new Gmail account (or have a current Gmail account) to gain access the new system as well as their current clinic information. Simply visit the [Google site](#) to set up a Gmail account which will be used to enter and manage data. NOTE: Administrators need to be sure to include a "Secondary email" which is needed if you later need to recover a lost password. Once an administrator has their Google username, they must send it to flucliniclocator@lungusa.org to allow the American Lung Association to complete their new registration.

As of Friday, October 16, 2009 the current Locator was closed to administrators so as to allow for a clean transfer of data. The public facing will exist as is until the final transition occurs.

Once the transition is complete, the current widget will no longer work. The new widget will take about a week to produce. In the interim, site visitors will be directed to "our temporary home" at google.org. Once the widgets are available they will again be posted to www.flucliniclocator.org and the language redirecting visitors to google.org will be removed.

We are poised to make a substantive impact on the current influenza season by helping the public protect themselves from influenza in all forms, reduce confusion about availability of vaccine, and elevate the American Lung Association brand. We call on the entire National Influenza Vaccine Summit family to do what it can to make this new endeavor a success!

Technical or procedural questions? Contact flucliniclocator@lungusa.org.

2. Clinics Serving Pregnant Women Being Urged to Provide Influenza Vaccine

The American Academy of Family Physicians (AAFP), the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (ACOG), the American Medical Association (AMA), and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) have issued a [group letter](#) urging clinicians to vaccinate pregnant patients against both seasonal and H1N1 influenza. The letter is accompanied by a fact sheet – "Pregnant Women and the Flu" – in [English](#) and [Spanish](#).

3. Feedback Sought on H1N1 Ancillary Supplies

CDC is seeking feedback on the ancillary supplies (e.g., alcohol wipes, needles and syringes) that are kitted and shipped separately from the distributor along with each shipment of H1N1 influenza vaccine. A [survey](#) has been developed.

4. Influenza Vaccine Price Gauging Under Investigation

Virginia state Attorney General Richard Blumenthal is investigating complaints of seasonal influenza vaccines being offered at many times the normal price. According to a [press release](#), Blumenthal stated that his "office is vigorously and aggressively investigating allegations of price gouging and favoritism in distribution of seasonal (influenza) vaccine."

5. Assessment of Background Rates of Adverse Events Following Influenza Vaccination

A recently [published paper](#) in *Lancet* examined that background rate of conditions that have been associated (whether real or alleged) with influenza vaccinations. CDC has developed [key points](#) on this paper.

6. 2009 H1N1 Influenza Vaccine Supply Status

CDC is posting daily updates of 2009 H1N1 vaccine supply allocations, orders, and shipments at www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/vaccination/vaccinesupply.htm. Allocation and distribution information is available in question-and-answer format for vaccine planners [here](#), while general supply and distribution information is available for the public [here](#).

7. CMS Revises Free Care Rule for 2009 H1N1 Influenza Vaccination

In the face of the national emergency presented by the 2009 H1N1 influenza virus, the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) has revised its long-standing policy that Medicaid is not liable for services that are available without charge to the beneficiary or other legally liable third parties. The complete ruling can be viewed [here](#).

8. Research to be Published on Estimates of Prevalence of 2009 H1N1 Influenza Cases

It is likely that the 43,677 laboratory-confirmed cases of 2009 H1N1 reported between April and July of 2009 are a substantial underestimation of the true number of cases for this time period. A recent study, which used a relatively quick and simple approach, was conducted to help estimate the true number of cases, and the human health impact of 2009 H1N1 during the first four months of the pandemic. The [study](#) is scheduled to be published in *Emerging Infectious Diseases* (serial on the Internet) in December 2009. CDC has developed [questions and answers](#) in response to this paper.

9. Survey of healthcare workers finds several gaps

The American Society of Health-System Pharmacists (ASHP) recently conducted a survey of healthcare workers about both seasonal and H1N1 influenza vaccination. The survey results show gaps in seasonal influenza vaccination rates, with only 37 percent of respondents reporting vaccination rates over 70 percent at their hospitals. The survey also revealed that both patients and hospital staff are asking pharmacists the following questions about H1N1 vaccination:

- Is the vaccine safe?
- Do I need to get the vaccine?
- Will there be enough vaccine to go around?

Summit members can read a [news release](#) from ASHP about the survey and review the [survey results](#).

10. Free Tent Cards for Healthcare Providers

The Health Industry Distributors Association (HIDA) and the Flu Vaccine Distribution Education Initiative have developed [free tent cards](#) for physicians and healthcare providers to place in their waiting rooms, offices, and healthcare sites. The "Flu Happens" tent cards promote seasonal and H1N1 flu vaccination and screening to patients throughout the influenza season. Supplies are limited. To order free copies, contact Melia Sandler with HIDA at Sandler@HIDA.org or 703-838-6111.

11. Online Videos to Brighten your Day

In the midst of a very serious situation, we can have a chuckle or two over several online videos that carry a strong message about avoiding influenza disease. The National Foundation for Infectious Diseases' Childhood Influenza Immunization Coalition (*C/IC*) created several new, attention-grabbing online videos that use humor to help clear up some common misperceptions among parents about influenza and the benefit of immunization for their children. These short videos parody extreme measures parents might take to protect their children from influenza vs. a simpler, more effective way – vaccination. These videos are available for you to share with patients, colleagues and friends. To view the videos, go to www.PreventChildhoodInfluenza.org/video or on [NFID's YouTube Channel](#)

The Virginia Department of Health has a great PSA on hand washing called "[Sneezing 101](#)". This video is also available for downloading to your website. Enjoy!