



October 7, 2009

**New York State
Office of
Children &
Family
Services**

Dear Provider:

As the H1N1 virus remains a health concern across the country, the Office of Children and Family Services (OCFS) continues to emphasize the importance of planning and practicing prevention strategies to help reduce exposure to the flu. Because of your unique role in providing services for youth, we need your help to prevent the spread of flu among our children.

David A. Paterson
Governor

Gladys Carrión, Esq.
Commissioner

In addition to practicing good health etiquette, the best way to prevent the flu is by getting vaccinated. All New Yorkers are encouraged to get the seasonal flu vaccine and are also encouraged to get the new H1N1 flu vaccine when it is available after certain priority groups have had ample opportunity to be vaccinated. Priority groups to receive the H1N1 Flu Vaccine, as established by the CDC, include:

- Health care workers and emergency medical services personnel;
- Pregnant women;
- Persons who live with or provide care for infants under six months of age;
- Children and young people ages six months through 24 years; and,
- Persons aged 25 through 64 years who have medical conditions that put them at higher risk for serious illness and influenza-related complications.

Capital View Office Park

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12144-2796

According to the NYS Department of Health, younger people are more likely to get infected with the new H1N1 flu virus than those 65 years and older. Therefore, younger persons are recommended to receive the first available doses of the H1N1 vaccine. Children 10 years and older and adults need just one dose of the new H1N1 vaccine. Children ages 9 and younger require two doses of the H1N1 vaccine approximately four weeks apart.

For information on H1N1 Flu Vaccination please contact your Local County Health Departments

http://www.health.state.ny.us/diseases/communicable/influenza/vaccination_clinics/

The New York State Department of Health has established a secure Internet web site, the Health Commerce System (HCS) also known as the Health Provider Network (HPN), to communicate with Health Care Providers statewide. The site provides highly secure and efficient exchange of reporting, surveillance, statistical, and general information with its public health and health provider partners. You must have an account and a password to access this system.

Obtaining an HCS account offers medical professionals, health care and qualified users many advantages including the ability to:

- view the novel H1N1 Influenza A response information and **pre-register** for H1N1 vaccine
- access the Health Alert Network (HAN)
- receive important communications from the Health Department



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To see if any personnel in your agency is eligible to apply for a Health Commerce System (HCS) Account please click onto the following website:

<https://hcsteamwork1.health.state.ny.us/pub>

To get the latest information please call the DOH H1N1 hotline at 1-800-808-1987 or visit the New York State Health Department website at www.nyhealth.gov or the CDC website at www.flu.gov. Thank you for your continued cooperation in this important matter.

Sincerely,

/s/ Laura M. Velez

Laura M. Velez
Deputy Commissioner