



COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA

Department of Health

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RICHMOND, VA 23218

KAREN REMLEY, MD, MBA, FAAP
STATE HEALTH COMMISSIONER

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September 15, 2010

Dear Local Government Official,

Following last year's historic H1N1 influenza season the Virginia Department of Health (VDH) is working hard to prepare for this year's season by building on lessons learned from H1N1 and ensuring that our communities are well informed about what to expect in the coming months. I believe these efforts to be of great importance as many Virginians may have concerns regarding the status of this season in comparison to the last.

Currently there is strong evidence that H1N1 illness patterns are transitioning towards patterns of seasonal influenza. Many people now have some immunity to H1N1; however, cases of illness and outbreaks associated with this strain are still expected to occur in 2010-2011. We expect that recognized risk groups, such as children, pregnant women, and those with underlying medical conditions, including obesity, will likely continue to be disproportionately affected with more severe disease.

For the first time, the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices is recommending flu vaccination for all persons ages 6 months and older. This year's seasonal flu vaccine will include the H1N1 (2009) strain as well as two other strains.

Please keep in mind that unlike last year, there has been no large-scale federal or state purchase of flu vaccine for this season. Thus, VDH will not have access to vaccine beyond what it routinely provides through local health departments and through planning and preparedness exercises. The vast majority of seasonal flu vaccine will be available through private sector pharmacies and physician offices.

In conclusion, please join me and local health departments in mitigating the impact of flu on all Virginians by encouraging vaccination among your constituents, employees, family and friends. As always, further information and assistance can be provided by your local health department (www.vdh.virginia.gov/lhd) or by visiting VDH's website (www.vdh.virginia.gov).

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Karen Remley".

Karen Remley, MD, MBA, FAAP
Commissioner