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TO: CAAC Patients

FROM: Your CAAC Physician

RE: H1N1 “Swine Flu” Vaccinations

DATE: September 23, 2009

Unless there is a strong contraindication otherwise, the physicians at Connecticut Asthma & Allergy advise that **all** of our patients obtain the seasonal flu vaccine and the soon-to-be-available novel H1N1 (swine flu) vaccine for this fall and winter.

Connecticut Asthma & Allergy has registered with the State of Connecticut Health Department to receive allotments of suitable H1N1 vaccines to complement the seasonal flu vaccine. They should be available in mid October or November. Our practice has no control over the number of H1N1 vaccines that will be shipped to us and the quantities may be limited.

Certain risk groups have been targeted to receive the H1N1 vaccine on a **priority** basis. These include:

1. Pregnant women. They are at higher risk for complications. This may also provide some protection to infant below the age of 6 months.
2. Household contacts and caregivers of children younger than 6 months of age. Infants are at higher risks for complications related to influenza. The vaccinations of individuals in contact with infants less than 6 months old will help protect the infant as a secondary benefit.
3. Health care and medical emergency service personnel. These individuals have higher exposure rates to sick people.
4. All individuals over the age of 6 months of age through 24 years of age. Children and young adults are out and about in large groups and are likely to come into close contact with infected individuals. They are also the chief targets for the H1N1 (swine flu) illness.
5. Persons age 25 through 64 years old who have health conditions associated with higher risk of medical complications from influenza. These include (but are not limited to) asthma, hypertension, heart disease, neuromuscular disorders, and cancer.

Of note, **individuals over the age of 65 are NOT a top priority** for receiving the novel H1N1 influenza vaccine. This does **NOT** mean that the vaccine is contraindicated for seniors. Instead, the listed groups above are ahead of seniors in priority. When adequate H1N1 vaccines are available, all individuals over the age of 65 should receive them, unless there is a contraindication.

September 23, 2009
RE: Influenza Vaccines
Page 2

The H1N1 vaccine will be available to Connecticut Asthma & Allergy and our patients free of charge. There will be an administration fee. This will be no higher than the Medicare allowable charge. Most individuals have insurance coverage that will pay for the administration cost.

Depending on their age, children may need two H1N1 flu shots. The first shot should be followed by the second within 21 to 28 days.

When available, you can receive the H1N1 vaccination during your regular visit (unless you are sick at that time). CAAC will set up influenza shot clinics for the sole purpose of administering the H1N1 and seasonal flu vaccines.

The novel H1N1 vaccine can be given at the same visit as the seasonal flu shot.

For those persons with an egg allergy, Connecticut Asthma & Allergy has a protocol for evaluating the safety of either flu vaccine. In most instances, they can be given safely once the patient is appropriately evaluated.

We hope this information will help you follow this important public safety issue. Thank you very much.

The Doctors and Staff at Connecticut Asthma & Allergy