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Media Update

COMMISSIONER'S OFFICE

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Initial shipment of H1N1 vaccine arrives in Anchorage

Statewide distribution underway

(Anchorage, AK) — The state of Alaska today received 4,200 doses of 2009 H1N1 (swine) flu nasal spray and immediately began repackaging it for distribution to public health centers throughout the state. The vaccine will be shipped out as quickly as possible, but delivery and administration of the vaccine could take up to a week.

This initial lot of nasal spray has been earmarked for vaccinating healthy children from 2 to 4 years old. Epidemiological evidence suggests that children in this age range are at increased risk for hospitalization compared to older children. Nasal spray vaccine is not licensed for use in children younger than 2 or for two other priority groups for the H1N1 vaccine: adults with underlying medical conditions and pregnant women.

The nasal spray is made from weakened viruses that do not cause the severe symptoms associated with the flu.

Subsequent shipments of vaccine will include both the nasal spray and the injectable forms recommended for all age groups. The state will eventually receive enough H1N1 vaccine for all Alaskans who want it. Until then, the priority groups include pregnant women; people in contact with children younger than 6 months old; health-care and emergency medical workers; people from 6 months to 24 years old; and people from 25 to 64 with medical conditions that put them at risk of complications from the flu.

For more information about the vaccine, go to: www.pandemicflu.alaska.gov.

For a complete listing of Alaska's public health centers go to:
<http://www.hss.state.ak.us/dph/nursing/locations.htm>.

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