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Press Release

COMMISSIONER'S OFFICE

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2010–2011 flu vaccine being distributed statewide

Everyone 6 months and older is encouraged to get vaccinated

(Anchorage, AK) — Influenza vaccine is beginning to appear throughout the state. Last week the Alaska Department of Health and Social Services began distributing flu vaccine to state public health centers, long-term care facilities, Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium clinics and some private providers. Private practice doctors and commercial pharmacies also have been receiving vaccine independently, and many are already promoting vaccination.

The state ordered almost 90,000 doses of flu vaccine for distribution this year. More than two-thirds of these doses (both injectable and nasal spray) are designated for children and adolescents, while the remainder is for adults. To date, the state has received about 75 percent of the vaccine ordered and began shipping it out on Sept. 13.

“This year’s vaccine protects against the three major strains — including H1N1 — expected to be circulating this year,” said Laurel Wood, Immunization Program manager for the Division of Public Health. “The good news is most people will need only one dose of vaccine, and it appears there will be plenty to go around.”

This year, for the first time, it is recommended that everyone 6 months of age and older get an annual flu vaccine.

“Influenza is the No. 1 vaccine preventable illness in the world,” Wood said. “Every year we see thousands of hospitalizations and a number of deaths in Alaska from an illness that is preventable. Everyone should get the vaccine, to protect themselves and to protect the people they love.”

For more information on the flu go to: www.flu.alaska.gov.

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