

Cover Sheet

DATE: January 16, 2014

SUBJECT: Notice to Clinicians: Montana Influenza
Related Hospitalizations, High Risk
Individuals with Underlying Medical
Conditions & Vaccination

For LOCAL HEALTH
DEPARTMENT reference only

DPHHS Subject Matter Resource for
more information regarding this HAN,
contact:

DPHHS CDCP
Epidemiology Section
1-406-444-0273

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DPHHS Health Alert Hotline:
1-800-701-5769

DPHHS HAN Website:
www.han.mt.gov

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Please call DPHHS to update contact information at 444-0919 or 444-6906

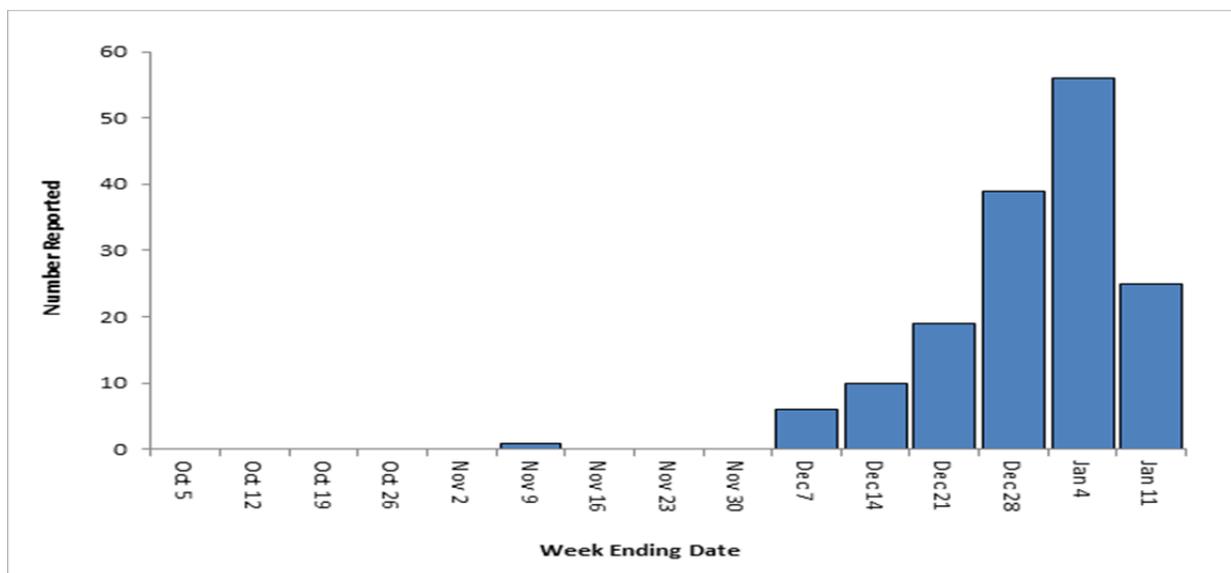
Information Sheet

Date: January 16, 2014

Subject: Notice to Clinicians: Montana Influenza Related Hospitalizations, High Risk Individuals with Underlying Medical Conditions & Vaccination

Background: From December 15th through January 11th, DPHHS has received 156 reports of influenza related hospitalizations. This represents a sharp increase in hospitalizations in a relatively short period of time. Of the 141 reports with vaccination status information, 71% (100) of the patients had not received influenza vaccine. Although data related to co-morbidities were not systematically obtained, data available suggest that a large proportion of the patients had high-risk conditions for influenza complications. DPHHS is conducting a retrospective review of cases and establishing a system to collect comorbidity on future cases.

Influenza hospitalizations by reporting week — Montana, 2013–2014 Season



Preliminary data as of 1/11/2014

For more information regarding Montana’s current Influenza activity visit the DPHHS Influenza Activity web page at <http://www.dphhs.mt.gov/influenza/influenzaactivity.shtml>

Information: The H1N1 virus continues to circulate widely in the U.S. and illnesses are being reported disproportionately among young and middle-aged adults. The H1N1 subtype has been the most common influenza virus detected in Montana this season DPHHS’ primary concern is the high correlation with hospitalizations and the lack of vaccination.

Recommendations:

Healthcare Providers:

DPHHS recommends that healthcare providers assess the vaccination status of their patients, especially those in the high-risk groups listed below. It is recommended that all individuals aged six months and older be vaccinated for influenza. It is particularly important to vaccinate individuals at high risk and with comorbid conditions as soon as possible.

People at High Risk for developing Flu-Related Complications

- Children younger than 5
- Adults 65 years of age and older
- Pregnant women
- Also, American Indians and Alaskan Natives seem to be at higher risk for flu complications

People who have medical conditions/comorbidities including:

- Asthma
- Chronic Lung Disease (e.g. and including CPOD, cystic fibrosis)
- Neurological and neuromuscular conditions (e.g. and including cerebral palsy, epilepsy, stroke)
- Blood disorders (such as sickle cell disease)
- Heart Disease
- Endocrine disorders (e.g. diabetes)
- Kidney disorders
- Liver disorders
- Metabolic disorders
- Weakened immune system (e.g. and including HIV infection, cancer/treatment, those on chronic steroids, autoimmune disease)
- People younger than 19 years of age who are receiving long-term aspirin therapy
- People who are morbidly obese

Treatment with antiviral drugs (oral oseltamivir and inhaled zanamivir) is an important second line of defense for those who become ill to reduce morbidity and mortality. Antiviral treatment is recommended as early as possible after onset of symptoms for any patient with confirmed or suspected influenza who is hospitalized; has severe, complicated, or progressive illness; or is at higher risk for influenza complications.

Laboratory confirmed influenza cases, hospitalizations and deaths are reportable conditions. Please remember to report cases meeting the above criteria to your local public health authority.

Information to help guide healthcare professionals in the management of seasonal influenza can be found at <http://www.cdc.gov/flu/professionals/>

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

January 16, 2014

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DPHHS reports sharp increase in influenza-related hospitalizations

State health officials report that as of January 11, 2014 there have been 156 Montanans hospitalized for influenza-related conditions so far this influenza season.

Most of these hospitalizations are recent as 139 of them have occurred since Dec. 15. These numbers reflect DPHHS influenza surveillance for the 2013-14 season, which officially began on October 1, 2013.

"Many of these hospitalizations could have been prevented since a majority of these people were not vaccinated against influenza," said Department of Public Health and Human Services (DPHHS) Director Richard Opper, "However, it's not too late to get the vaccine. It's readily available in Montana."

In 2013, Gov. Steve Bullock and Director Opper released the "Big Sky. New Horizons." plan to improve the health of Montanans. The plan seeks to increase the number of Montanans who receive annual flu shots from 34 percent to 60 percent.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) noted the same H1N1 subtype of seasonal influenza, as seen in 2009, is causing the majority of influenza cases. CDC also reported that less than half of Americans were vaccinated against influenza during the 2012 - 2013 influenza season.

"Influenza vaccination is recommended for all persons older than age six months," said Bekki Wehner, DPHHS Immunization Program supervisor. "It's the best way to prevent influenza."

Wehner states it's especially important for persons at higher risk for influenza-related hospitalization or death to receive the influenza vaccine. Persons at high risk of influenza complications include adults 65 years of age or older, pregnant women, and persons with certain chronic health conditions.

Fortunately, getting the influenza vaccine is more convenient than ever. Influenza vaccine is available from your doctor, local health department, and at many retail pharmacies. For more information about influenza vaccine and the impact of influenza during the 2013 - 2014 season, please visit the DPHHS website for current influenza data, vaccine and prevention information at www.dphhs.mt.gov