

An Important Message from the Santa Cruz County Public Health Officer

Our most important news is that **H1N1 vaccine availability is improving throughout the county**. Thousands of people at the highest risk for H1N1 flu and influenza-related complications have already been vaccinated.

65,050 doses of H1N1 vaccine have arrived throughout Santa Cruz County as of 12/15/09. By mid-January that total should reach over 86,000 doses county-wide. This means that many healthcare providers will be able to provide this important vaccine to their patients in the coming weeks. The Pandemic Influenza (H1N1) 2009 virus remains the primary influenza virus infecting people in the U.S.

Public Health has administered over 9,000 H1N1 vaccines to those in the target groups and has completed four large-scale walk-in clinics. Through the combined efforts of Public Health and community healthcare providers, it's likely over 35,000 vaccines have been given. We are increasingly confident that manufacturing has begun to keep pace with demand. Long lines and wait times are declining, and we are quite optimistic vaccine supply will continue to improve to meet the demand. We remind you of the following:

- H1N1 vaccine remains available only through health care providers until further notice.
- Vaccine is ordered directly from the State of California and is distributed directly to health care providers. Federal guidance accompanies each shipment directing providers as to which patients can receive the vaccine.
- Some healthcare providers have not received sufficient vaccine to serve all of their patients, and may restrict vaccinations to high risk groups determined by the CDC.
- The vaccine comes in several types, and it is important to understand that not everyone can receive the same vaccine type, so while vaccine may be available; it may not be the right type for you.

Many healthcare providers publish specific H1N1 vaccine availability information on their Web sites or on phone hotlines, including:

Santa Cruz County Health Services Agency - www.santacruzhealth.org/swineflu or call 454-4343

Palo Alto Medical Foundation Santa Cruz - www.pamf.org/h1n1 or call 423-4111 and follow the prompts for flu information

Any additional vaccination opportunities for those without a medical home or for whom co-payments are an obstacle to vaccination will be announced on the internet, information lines, and in the press. As vaccine supplies increase in late December and January, restrictions on its use will be lifted. We encourage vaccination for all as the best protective measure that can be taken for this season and for every season in the future. For more information about what you can do to protect yourself and your family from the flu, go to: www.santacruzhealth.org/SwineFlu/families.shtm or www.flu.gov.



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Phil Nambury".