

**Bureau of Emergency Medical Services
New York State Department of Health**

To: EMS Coordinators

Date: August 21, 2009

Topic: H1N1 Influenza Activities for EMS

I hope you are enjoying what remains of the summer. During this summer the Bureau has continued to participate in planning and discussions regarding the fall flu season. I would like to provide you with a brief update on these ongoing activities.

The Bureau is participating in several work groups that are developing information and guidance to assist Healthcare and EMS providers for this fall's flu season and possible continued H1N1 spread. There is a lot of information and some concerns that are being discussed as Influenza and its effects are being monitored in the Southern Hemisphere.

As part of those efforts, we are working with our department's Infectious Disease Control group and Occupational Health group to develop guidance suited to EMS on steps that can be taken to protect providers as they continue to respond to persons who may have or are suspected of having influenza.

There are many projects underway, and completion of some of them is awaiting revised guidance from the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) as to what is occurring worldwide.

We will continue to keep you apprised of information that we feel benefits and protects the EMS community.

As you prepare for this upcoming seasonal flu, we want to remind you of several things that can be done in advice to help protect EMS providers, their families and the EMS system in your community.

1. Recommend to EMS agencies that they review their plans for continuity of operation (COOP) should illness or absenteeism be significant enough to affect their EMS response.
2. Encourage EMS providers and their families to get the seasonal flu shot when it becomes available.
3. In collaboration with your Local Health Department, advise EMS agencies and providers as to how they can access the seasonal influenza shots, if they are able to take it.
4. EMS Agencies should review their Agency Respiratory Protection Plans to ensure that they have the necessary equipment, plans and preparations to protect their employees/ volunteers should it be necessary to implement those plans.
5. Keep yourself informed, by going to www.Nyhealth.gov website. Information has been changing, and new information will be available there when it's released.

We will contact you again when we have additional information affecting EMS,

Sincerely,
Jim Soto
Disaster Preparedness Unit
Bureau of EMS

Cc: Regional EMS Councils
State EMS Council
SEMAC