



RON CHAPMAN, MD, MPH
Director & State Health Officer

State of California—Health and Human Services Agency
California Department of Public Health



EDMUND G. BROWN JR.
Governor

CDPH Advisory

Severe influenza due to influenza A (H1N1) pdm09 (pH1N1) virus

December 2013

Last week, the CDC issued a Health Alert Network (HAN) discussing recent reports from several states of severe infection associated with pH1N1 virus infection (<http://emergency.cdc.gov/HAN/han00359.asp>.) The HAN described critically-ill young and middle-aged adults infected with influenza, with complications of severe pneumonia requiring hospitalization, intensive care unit (ICU) admission, need for mechanical ventilation, extra corporeal membrane oxygenation (ECMO) and death. CDPH maintains a statewide surveillance system monitoring children and adults under age 65 years with laboratory-confirmed influenza who require ICU hospitalization or who die. In the last week, many counties statewide have reported an increase in severe influenza cases. While many of these people with severe illness have had risk factors for influenza-associated complications, including pregnancy and morbid obesity, others have not. The influenza vaccination status of these severe cases is not known, however, the 2013-2014 influenza vaccines include protection against pH1N1.

Since its emergence in 2009, pH1N1 has been observed to cause more illness in children and young adults compared to older adults, although severe illness has been seen in all age groups. While it is still early in the 2013-14 influenza season, pH1N1 has been the predominant circulating virus so far both nationwide and in California. The severe flu outcomes reported in the HAN are a reminder that flu can be a very serious disease for anyone, including young, healthy adults.

CDC and CDPH recommend annual influenza vaccination for everyone 6 months and older. Anyone who has not yet been vaccinated this season should get an influenza vaccine now; particularly persons at higher risk for severe influenza such as pregnant women and obese persons.