

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**H1N1 Flu Vaccinations Clinics Being Offered by Appointment**  
Six free vaccination dates for high risk Marin County residents

The Marin County Department of Health & Human Services (HHS) is offering FREE H1N1 flu vaccinations for high risk Marin County residents, by appointment only, on six days throughout the month of December at the Marin Health and Wellness Campus, 3260 Kerner Boulevard in San Rafael.

Vaccination appointments begin today (8 am to noon) and may be scheduled for:

**Thursday, December 17<sup>th</sup>** from 8 am to 12 pm & 1 pm to 5 pm; **Tuesday, December 22<sup>nd</sup>** from 8 am to 12 pm; **Thursday, December 24<sup>th</sup>** from 8 am to 12 pm; **Tuesday, December 29<sup>th</sup>** from 8 am to 12 pm; and **Thursday, December 31<sup>st</sup>** from 8 am to 12 pm. Appointments may be scheduled by calling **473-6007**.

“In an effort to provide H1N1 vaccinations to Marin County residents in a convenient and efficient manner, we are offering up to 500 vaccinations by appointment during the month of December,” said **Dr. Fred Schwartz, Public Health Officer for Marin County**. “While flu activity seems to be leveling off nationwide, it is still widespread in California. While most cases resolve uneventfully, H1N1 flu can cause severe illness, hospitalizations and even death. That’s why it’s still important that high risk people get vaccinated as soon as possible.”

**High Risk** - As recommended by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), H1N1 vaccinations are still being offered to those with a high risk of infection:

- **pregnant women**
- **those who live with or care for infants under six months of age**
- **healthcare and emergency medical services personnel**
- **children and young adults (age 6 months through 24 years)**
- **adults (age 25-64) with medical conditions** that might increase risk

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*(such as asthma, heart disease, diabetes, immunosuppression)*

As soon as sufficient supplies of the H1N1 vaccine are received, HHS will be lifting the “high risk restriction” and vaccinations should be more widely available to the general public. We anticipate this will occur in early January. *(Any changes will be announced to the media; residents may also watch the website for updates at [www.marinflu.org](http://www.marinflu.org) or call the H1N1 Flu Hotline at 473-6823.)*

**Not Too Late to Get Vaccinated** – There is still significant flu activity this year , and a new “wave” of flu is still possible this season. Those in the high risk category are encouraged to be vaccinated as soon as possible. All others can be vaccinated as soon as additional shipments of the vaccine become available.

**Reminder: Kids Need a Second Dose** – Parents are reminded that young children, age nine and under need a second dose of the H1N1 vaccine for proper prevention. You must wait at least 21 days after the first dose to receive the second. Parents should call to make an appointment at the free clinics listed above or contact their medical provider.

**Flu Prevention and Control** – While there are some signs that flu activity is leveling off or decreasing, flu is still widespread in California. HHS encourages all Marin County residents to help control germs and prevent spreading the flu virus with five simple steps:

1. **Get vaccinated** – get the H1N1 as soon as possible (especially those at high risk of complications), and get the seasonal flu shot when your medical provider or community clinic receives additional doses.
2. **Wash Your Hands** – wash with soap and water for at least 20 seconds; hand sanitizer is also helpful.
3. **Cover Your Cough** – cough or sneeze into the crook of your arm or a tissue (dispose of any used tissues).
4. **Stay Home When You’re Sick** – don’t spread your germs at school, daycare, work, or in the community.
5. **Keep Informed & Share the News** – get the latest updates on flu and vaccine information at [www.marinflu.org](http://www.marinflu.org).

**Status of H1N1 Flu** – According to the CDC, influenza activity across the nation showed a decreasing trend over the last several weeks. However, flu activity is still higher than normal for this time of year. Hospitalizations continued to be highest in younger populations, with the highest rate in children 0 to age 4.

**In California**, flu activity remains widespread and while it may be leveling off, is above normal for this time of year. A total of 7,546 hospitalizations (including 1,442 ICU cases) and 397

deaths have been reported. 2,711 hospitalizations were for those 18 or younger; and there have been 44 pediatric deaths.

Hospitalizations decreased from 794 to 278 last week. The rate of hospitalizations are highest for those under one year old. There have also been 517 hospitalizations of pregnant women, and 15 flu-related deaths. Across the state, there was an overall decrease in the percentage of outpatient visits associated with influenza-like illness in the first week of December.

**In Marin County**, there were 62 hospitalizations associated with H1N1 flu as of December 14<sup>th</sup>, including 19 cases with severe respiratory illness requiring care in the ICU. Four laboratory-confirmed H1N1 influenza deaths have been recorded in the county; a fifth death was due to Influenza A (with an unknown subtype). All five deaths were adults with underlying medical conditions.

**H1N1 Vaccine Information** – As of December 4, a total of 54,000 doses of H1N1 vaccine were allocated to Marin, including Kaiser, with about 10,000 more doses expected to reach providers through December 18, and another 10,000 by December 31. Kaiser expects to receive additional doses during those periods for its high risk patients.. The majority of the vaccine has been distributed to hospitals, clinics and healthcare providers who ordered it.

The Department of Health and Human Services administered over 5,000 doses of the H1N1 vaccine at the four free vaccination clinics offered to date.

**Updated Marin County H1N1 Flu Information** is available at [www.MarinFlu.org](http://www.MarinFlu.org) or by calling the H1N1 Flu Hotline at 473-6823.

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