



CNYMRC Times

Citizen Volunteers: Helping Our Communities, Ready to Respond

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Central New York Regional Medical Reserve Corps

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NYS Requiring Healthcare Worker Influenza Vaccinations

This past summer, New York State passed an emergency resolution that requires all personnel in certain healthcare settings (hospitals, local health departments, specified clinics) to be vaccinated annually against influenza. From a letter released by the NYSDOH:

“On August 13, 2009 an emergency regulation went into effect, which requires that all personnel of certain health care settings receive annual vaccinations against influenza by November 30 of each year unless they have a medical contraindication to the vaccination or the State Commissioner of Health determines that there is an insufficient supply of vaccine for the year. The primary

purpose of this regulation is to protect the health and safety of vulnerable patients, whose risk of serious adverse effects from influenza is high. An added benefit is to maintain a healthy workforce during flu season.

Personnel who must be vaccinated against influenza include all those affiliated with the employer, paid or unpaid, who have direct contact with patients or whose activities are such that they pose a risk of transmission of influenza to patients or to those who provide direct care to patients. ‘Personnel’ is defined as anyone affiliated with any organization (noted above), including but not limited to employees; members of the medical staff, including attending physicians;

contract staff; students and volunteers.”

How does this resolution affect CNYMRC members? Since most duties in a flu vaccination clinic require direct contact with patients, any CNYMRC member who chooses to volunteer in a flu clinic needs to be vaccinated against seasonal and, when available, H1N1 flu. Many of you may already need to receive these vaccines through your employer. If you cannot receive the vaccines through other avenues but agree to volunteer in a flu clinic, the available vaccine will be provided to you by the requesting county. H1N1 vaccine distribution will be based on priority guidelines for the distribution of the vaccine as established by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Winter Travel Preparedness

As we know very well in CNY, winter can be challenging. Between blinding lake effect snow and the occasional ice storm, winter travel provides its own unique preparedness needs. You may be wondering why in these days of cell phones and good highways, we should prepare for winter travel. We never know when we may slide off the road or get caught in a white-out conditions and help may not be close by. Fall is the time to get ready for winter. Here are some simple tips to help you prepare for winter travel:

Winterize Your Vehicle

Have a mechanic do a check-up on your car looking at the battery, belts and hoses, radiator, oil, brakes, ignition system, exhaust system, heater/defroster, windshield wipers, and lights. Repair or replace as necessary.

Before the Journey

Check the weather forecast and road

conditions before driving. Consider adjusting your route if poor driving conditions exist. Keep the gas tank more than half full. In the case of long journeys, let someone know your route and estimated time of arrival.

Your Winter Car Kit

Carry a cell phone with you. Consider keeping a bag stocked and always present in your vehicle. Kits should include road maps, a blanket or extra coat, extra socks, scarves, hats and mittens, a flashlight with extra batteries, first aid kit, pocketknife, non-perishable food such as granola bars or crackers, booster/jumper cables, small shovel, small tool kit or multi-purpose tool, and a bag of sand or cat litter for traction.

Caught in the Storm

If you end up off the road or decide to wait out the worst of the storm, there are some simple tips to follow. Stay in your car. Venturing out not only puts you at risk from the weather but also puts you at risk for getting lost or getting hit by

another driver. Call for assistance if you can. Use your hazard lights so that others can see you. For heat, start the car for 10 minutes every hour. Use items in your car kit to keep you warm. If you are alone, do simple exercises such as windmills. If you have passengers, huddle together for warmth. Remember to slightly open a window on the side opposite the wind for ventilation. Keep the exhaust clear of snow to prevent carbon monoxide poisoning. Hang a bright colored cloth from the antenna or road-side window.

These simple tips can help us be prepared for whatever winter travel is ahead. Be safe this winter.



H1N1 KNOW what to do about the FLU!

Novel H1N1 Flu and Seasonal Flu: Differences and Similarities

Many people are wondering what the differences are between seasonal flu and novel H1N1 flu (Swine Flu). Novel H1N1 flu is caused by a new virus that is different from the seasonal flu we usually see each fall and winter. The virus that causes the seasonal flu changes a little bit each year, but the changes are small and people have some immunity to the virus. This year, the flu virus that is spreading is new and different enough so that many people, especially younger people, do not have much immunity. This is the reason why so many people got sick in the spring and we expect to see many more people, especially children, come down with the flu this fall.

Every year people get sick with the flu and every year some people die or are hospitalized from the flu. With the novel H1N1 flu, the people who are most likely to get the flu and who may get sickest are pregnant women, children under 5 years, people of any age with certain chronic medical conditions, such as asthma, diabetes or lung disease, and people under 19 who are receiving long-term aspirin therapy.

For the best protection, get vaccinated

Because seasonal flu will likely be around at the same time as novel H1N1 flu, it is important for everyone to get seasonal flu vaccine now. As novel H1N1 vaccine is manufactured and delivered it will go first to people in certain priority groups including pregnant women, people who live with or care for children under 6 months of age, health care workers, emergency medical responders, persons ages 6-24 years, and people 25-64 years old who have chronic health disorders or compromised immune systems. After that, everyone else will be able to get it. For the best protection, get the novel H1N1 vaccine as soon as it is available to you.

Watch for flu symptoms

Flu symptoms include fever, cough, runny nose, sore throat, body aches, headache, chills and fatigue. With novel H1N1 flu sometimes there is diarrhea and vomiting. If you get these symptoms, stay home and limit contact with others until at least 24 hours after your fever has gone without the use of medicine. Most people can recover from flu at home with no need for medical treatment. However, if you are at high risk for complications of flu, contact your doctor.

Fight the flu

Take these everyday steps to prevent the spread of germs and reduce your risk of getting or spreading the flu:

- Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze, or sneeze into your sleeve—not your hands. Throw the tissue in the trash after you use it.
- Wash your hands often with soap and warm water, especially after you cough or sneeze.
- Alcohol-based gel hand cleaners are also good to use if you are not near a sink.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth. Germs spread this way.
- Try to avoid close contact with sick people. Stay at least six feet away from someone who is coughing or sneezing.
- If you have the flu and will be around other people, you should wear a facemask. If you must take care of someone with the flu, and are at high risk of serious illness if you get sick, you should also wear a mask.

More information about the flu is available at www.nyhealth.gov and www.flu.gov.

From Your Coordinator...

I love everything about Fall...the first chilly nip in the air that makes you snuggle under the covers, the beauty of changing leaves, the apples and pumpkins, drinking hot chocolate and hot cider again. This Fall promises to be all that and so much more.

For many of us, Fall also means the start of flu season. I would like to encourage you to get your flu shots. Doing so not only helps to keep you healthy but helps to keep those around you healthy too.

As you have probably heard from your employer or from the article *NYS Requiring Healthcare Worker Vaccination*, it is now required for all personnel in certain settings to be vaccinated for the flu. Regardless of how you may feel about this emergency resolution, if you plan to volunteer in a

flu clinic in any of the CNYMRC counties, you need to get your flu shots. It is best to get your seasonal flu shot as early in the season as your provider advises. Plans are being made to provide H1N1 shots to volunteers who do not have access through their employers as healthcare workers or are not part of one of the priority groups. The H1N1 vaccine will be provided to those volunteers who are expecting to assist in flu clinics.

Your assistance is vital to the success of this year's flu season, so I hope each of you will roll up your sleeve, grit your teeth, and get your shots. I'll be getting mine. Then, back to running through the fallen leaves!

Your CNYMRC Coordinator,
Bobbi Alcock

Fall Birthdays

October

Patricia Cupernall
Gail Duke
Nancy Forsyth
Alexandra George
Kristina Hingre
David Newman
Martin Schaeffer
Cory Seelman
Wendi Zufelt

November

Diane Avery
Sharon Bliss-Chandler
Sandra Burns
Luis Castro
Kathleen Cuddy
F. Lee Dutton
Paul Garvey
Phillip Gioia
Patricia Hudelson
Daniel Mackey
Edward Mehrhof
Lynne Odell-Holzer
Jack Resnick
Brenda Siegfried
Harold Small
Vera Turk
Sara Upfold-Harrell

December

Maritza Alvarez
Tammy Balamut
Theresa Baxter
Steven Berkowitz
Brenda Jackson
Paul Marciniak
Mary Jo Marvar
Kathrin Petterelli
Colleen Redding
Anne Ryan
Carol Sherwood
Rose Stiles
Cheryl Stuper
Christine Vecchio

CNY Regional Medical
Reserve Corps

Lead Agency:
Onondaga County Health
Department
421 Montgomery Street
Syracuse, NY 13202
Phone: (315) 435-3648
Fax: (315) 435-3613
E-mail: cnymrc@ongov.net
Web: [www.ongov.net/
Health/mrc](http://www.ongov.net/Health/mrc)

News from Across the Region: Achieving Active Status

Now that the CNYMRC is more established and there is a clearer vision of our mission, the member county health departments are asking all volunteers to consider achieving Active status this Fall. All CNYMRC members are expected to attend an orientation and complete five required courses. These required courses are Personal Preparedness, Psychological First Aid, CPR, IS-100a (Introduction to the Incident Command System), and IS-700a (National Incident Management System). The required courses are considered the nationwide baseline for MRC volunteers to be prepared to respond during a crisis. All but the CPR course are available on-line. The direct links to on-line options for these courses are listed here.

Personal Preparedness

training.fema.gov/EMIWeb/IS/is22.asp

Psychological First Aid

[www.centerfordisastermedicine.org/pfa/
PFA_Start.html](http://www.centerfordisastermedicine.org/pfa/PFA_Start.html)

IS-100a: Intro to ICS

training.fema.gov/EMIWeb/IS/IS100a.asp

IS-700a: NIMS

training.fema.gov/EMIWeb/IS/IS700a.asp

CPR courses are available through your local American Heart Association or American Red Cross chapters. The CNYMRC reimburses up to \$40 for the CPR course.

The Fall Training Conference on October 3 (see *Calendar of Events*) is a classroom option allowing members to attend a CNYMRC orientation and complete the above listed courses in one day.

H1N1 Liability Coverage

Volunteer liability coverage is something the CNYMRC counties have been working on for quite a while. While liability coverage for volunteers is available during a declared crisis, volunteers may not have coverage in some CNYMRC counties during non-emergency activities. That is not the case for volunteering in 2009 H1N1 flu vaccination clinics.

In June, Secretary Sebelius of the Department of Health and Human Services signed a declaration under the Public Readiness and Emergency Preparedness (PREP) Act to extend liability immunity against tort claims to individuals and entities involved in all stages of H1N1 vaccine activities, including the distribution, prescription, and

administration of the vaccine. This immunity means that there is no legal tort claim that can be pursued in state or federal court against a volunteer working in H1N1 flu clinics. The exception to this declaration is liability due to willful misconduct.

What does this mean for the CNYMRC? Regardless of the county you are assisting with 2009 H1N1 activities, you have liability coverage. For instance, you cannot be sued if someone with an unknown contraindication has a reaction to the vaccine. This may also help our member county health departments in moving toward obtaining liability coverage for all unit activities.

Calendar of Events

CNYMRC Training Conference

Saturday, October 3, 9:00 am-5:00 pm

Carousel Center, 6th Floor Meeting Room, Syracuse

Complete member orientation and four of the five required courses to reach Active status in one day. These required courses provide you with the baseline of knowledge necessary to be prepared to respond to a crisis. Register for some or all of the offered courses by October 1.

Onondaga County First Responder Drive-Thru Seasonal Flu Vaccination

Wednesday, October 14, 10:00 am-6:30 pm

Regional Market (near Carousel Center), 2100 Park St., Syracuse

This activity serves a dual purpose—vaccinating first responders against seasonal flu and exercising the county's mass vaccination with social distancing plan. Volunteers are still needed to assist with general duties, such as traffic and forms distribution. Volunteers need to attend one of the offered trainings as well as get their own seasonal flu shot. The shot can be provided on the day of the exercise, if necessary. RSVP by October 2.

First Responder Drive-Thru Training

Monday, October 5, 10:00-11:00 am **OR** 6:00-7:00 pm

Onondaga County Health Dept., 9th Floor Civic Center, Syracuse

This training brings you inside the mass vaccination exercise—the whys, whats, and hows. Register by October 2.

Onondaga County Seasonal Flu Vaccination Clinics

Saturday, October 31, 8:30 am-12:30 pm, St. Elizabeth Seton, Baldwinsville

Saturday, November 14, 8:30 am-12:30 pm, Believers Chapel, Syracuse

Wednesday, November 18, 12:30-4:30 pm, Southwest Community Center

Saturday, December 5, 8:30 am-12:30 pm, Northeast Community Center

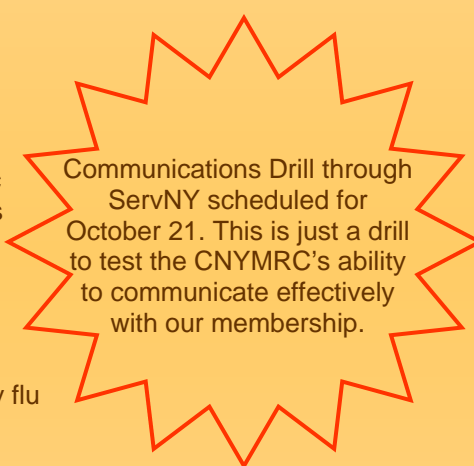
Screeners (MD, PA, NP, RN) needed in these clinics for seasonal flu. Clinics may expand to include H1N1 vaccinations. Volunteering in a flu clinic fulfills the public health requirement of membership. Volunteers need to attend one of the trainings as well as get their own seasonal flu shot. The shot can be provided on the day of the clinic, if necessary. RSVP by October 15.

Flu Clinic Orientation

Friday, October 16, 9:00 am-12:00 pm **OR** Monday, October 19, 6:00-8:00 pm

Onondaga County Health Dept., 501 East Fayette St., Syracuse

This orientation takes you through the screening process for the Onondaga County flu clinics. Register by October 2.



Communications Drill through ServNY scheduled for October 21. This is just a drill to test the CNYMRC's ability to communicate effectively with our membership.

CNYMRC Member Orientation

Thursday, December 3, 6:30-7:30 pm

Liverpool Public Library, Sargeant Meeting Room, 310 Tulip St., Liverpool

Take the first step toward membership in the CNYMRC by learning about the unit and its activities. Register by November 30.

American Red Cross Mass Care Shelter Training

Saturday, November 21, 8:30 am-12:00 pm

Onondaga-Oswego ARC Chapter, 220 Herald Place, Syracuse

This FREE course provides an overview of the activities performed by the Mass Care group in support of a disaster relief operation. As the CNYMRC becomes more established, plans are being created to handle special needs shelters co-located with ARC mass care shelters. This course provides volunteers with the knowledge of what else will be happening in the same shelter. Call (315) 234-2247 by November 11 to register.

American Red Cross Psychological First Aid

Saturday, December 12, 8:30 am-12:30 pm

Onondaga-Oswego ARC Chapter, 220 Herald Place, Syracuse

This FREE course provides the framework for understanding the factors that affect stress responses in disaster relief workers and the clients they serve. In addition, it provides practical suggestions about what you can say and do as you practice the principles of psychological first aid. Call (315) 234-2247 by December 1 to register.