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PLEASE POST – BL10234

DATE October 23, 2009

H1N1 and Seasonal Flu vaccine

The provincial government has just announced that seasonal flu vaccine will be administered at the same time as the vaccine for H1N1. Prior to this, the government planned to offer the seasonal vaccine only after the H1N1 vaccination program was complete. H1N1 vaccination for high-risk groups will begin next week.

HSA has concerns about the decision to administer the two vaccines at the same time, and we are taking the lead in discussions with other unions and the provincial government to satisfy these concerns before making recommendations to our members. We expect to be able to provide further information to our members by early next week.

In the meantime, HSA advises members to wait until we have clarified this important question.

Pregnant Women And H1N1

Pregnant women are considered part of the high-risk groups eligible to participate in the first round of vaccinations starting next week, but we are advising members who are pregnant to review their options carefully.

The H1N1 vaccine offered next week contains an adjuvant. An unadjuvanted version of the vaccine, which is the preferred option for pregnant women, will be available in a few weeks time.

HSA advises pregnant members to have a discussion with their physician about the risks associated with adjuvanted vaccine versus the risk of contracting of H1N1 prior to getting the vaccine.

