



Vermont Among Nation's Best for H1N1 Vaccine Protection

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BURLINGTON - A U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention report released today shows that Vermont had among the highest rates of vaccine coverage in the nation against the H1N1 pandemic strain of influenza.

According to the report, Vermont had the nation's second best coverage for people age 25-to-64 years at high risk of becoming ill (42 percent), and the nation's second highest vaccination rate for children ages 6 months to 17 years (72 percent).

"I am very proud of everyone who stepped forward to protect Vermonters during a challenging time," said Health Commissioner Wendy Davis, MD. "The cooperation and dedication demonstrated by health officials, our partners and Vermonters in every corner of the state was unprecedented."

As a region, New England had the nation's best vaccination coverage, in part because of the collaboration that existed among the states. Four states in the New England region (Vermont, Maine, Rhode Island, and Massachusetts) were praised in the report for achieving high coverage rates in children. Three states, including Vermont, conducted statewide school vaccination campaigns during a time when vaccine was in high demand.

"We saw early in this outbreak how quickly this flu was spreading regionally, and then statewide, and we were in daily contact with our partners throughout New England," Dr. Davis said. "It was affecting young people disproportionately, and flu spreads more easily in a school setting. Protecting our students was among our highest and most urgent priorities."

A total of 270 first dose shot clinics were done in the schools, and 200 second-dose shot clinics. Vermont's last school-based clinic was Feb. 19, 2010. Vermont's strong vaccination rate in the CDC report was also reflected in data collected by the Vermont Immunization Registry (IMR) - a confidential, computerized system for maintaining childhood immunization records. Vermont's registry tracked the dates of immunizations given, printed reports for parents and schools, and provided guidance for the timing of vaccine administration.

According to the Vermont IMR, the 5-to-18 age group had the highest number of individuals vaccinated. Nearly 75,000 Vermonters in that age group were vaccinated. Overall, Vermont vaccinated 169,692 in the original target groups (44 percent of the 386,100 people eligible). A total of 200,780 doses of H1N1 vaccine were administered statewide.

The CDC report was compiled from a national telephone survey conducted through the months of December, January, and February. The full report can be viewed at <http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/>.

There is still evidence of H1N1 influenza circulating. The Health Department recommends people receive first or second H1N1 flu doses at a local **Health Department District Office**, or contact your doctor's office.

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