



**THE STATE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT
UNIVERSITY OF THE STATE OF NEW YORK**
Richard P. Mills
President of The University and
Commissioner of Education



**NEW YORK STATE
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH**
Richard F. Daines, M.D.
Commissioner

May 4, 2009

**URGENT MESSAGE FOR PHARMACY AND WHOLESALER ESTABLISHMENTS
The New York State Department of Health (NYSDOH) and the New York State Education
Department (NYSED) ask for your immediate attention to the following matter**

As you know, Governor David A. Paterson activated New York State's health emergency preparedness plan and put the State on high alert to quickly identify and respond to any cases of swine-origin influenza A (H1N1) virus (S-OIV) infection. This letter provides guidance regarding appropriate utilization of antiviral medications (Oseltamivir and Zanamivir) for prevention and treatment of S-OIV infection. We are writing to assure that current supplies are appropriately utilized and that persons at greatest risk of infection (as defined below) have access to needed medications. As we are currently at the end of the traditional flu season inventories of these medications may be low. While additional shipments are anticipated, it is critical that the pharmacies do not accumulate unneeded supplies and instead follow guidance developed by the New York State Department of Health (NYSDOH).

The NYSDOH has collaborated with the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and local health departments on guidelines for appropriate administration of antiviral medications during this emerging situation (guidelines attached). The NYSDOH strongly urges all health care providers to strictly adhere to these guidelines and dispense medications accordingly. As noted in the guidelines, treatment is appropriate for individuals who are at increased risk of developing S-OIV infection or who are likely to develop complications of seasonal influenza infection as follows:

- Confirmed, probable or suspected cases of S-OIV infection in persons with severe illness; and
- Confirmed, probable or suspected cases of S-OIV infection in patients with mild illness who are at high risk for complications of seasonal influenza. These individuals include persons with:
 - Chronic pulmonary, cardiovascular, renal, hepatic, hematological, or metabolic disorders (including diabetes mellitus);
 - Immunosuppression;
 - HIV-infection;
 - Compromised respiratory function including conditions which increase the risk for aspiration;
 - Pregnancy;
 - Elderly > 65 years;
 - Residents (regardless of age) in a nursing home or other long-term care institution; and
 - Children less than 2 years of age.

Antiviral treatment **may be** considered for other confirmed, probable or suspected cases of S-OIV infection as detailed in the Department's guidance (attached).

In some instances prophylaxis may be indicated. In these instances either Oseltamivir or Zanamivir should be initiated as soon as possible following exposure and should continue for 10 days following the last known exposure to S-OIV infection. As per NYSDOH guidance antiviral chemoprophylaxis **is recommended** for the following individuals:

1. Household close contacts who are at high risk for complications of influenza (as defined above); and
2. Health care workers or public health workers who were not using appropriate personal protective equipment during close contact with a confirmed, probable or suspected case of S-OIV infection during the case's infectious period.

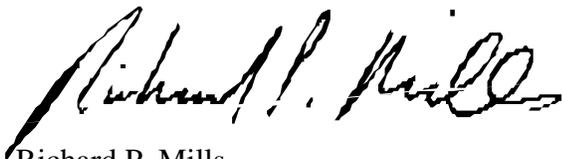
Antiviral chemoprophylaxis **can be** considered for the following individuals:

1. Children attending school or day care who are at high risk for complications of influenza and who had close contact (face-to-face) with a confirmed, probable or suspected case.
2. Health care workers who are at high risk for complications of influenza and who are working in an area of a health care facility in which patients with confirmed S-OIV cases are present, or who are caring for patients with any acute febrile respiratory illness.
3. Travelers to Mexico who are at high risk for complications of influenza.
4. First responders who are at high risk for complications of influenza and who are working in areas with a confirmed case or cases of S-OIV infection.

Please take time to carefully read the enclosed Health Advisory Update for additional details and recommendations regarding testing and treatment. The NYSDOH will provide updated guidance as additional information becomes available. Updated information will be posted on the CDC website at: www.cdc.gov/swineflu and on the NYSDOH website at www.nyhealth.gov. Information specific to New York City can be found at <http://www.nyc.gov>.

We are confident that together New York State's health care providers will meet the challenge presented by the current situation. We thank you for your dedication and efforts during this critical period.

Sincerely,



Richard P. Mills
Commissioner of Education



Richard F. Daines, M.D.
Commissioner of Health

Attd: NYS Clinical Guidance for Treatment of Swine-Origin Influenza A H1N1 (Swine Flu) Virus Infection