

Dear Colleague

## INFLUENZA A (H1N1) - VACCINATION FOR TRAVELLERS TO THE SOUTHERN HEMISPHERE

### Introduction

1. Further to the previous letter dated 19 February 2010 from the Chief Nursing Officer and myself, I am writing to advise that the Influenza A (H1N1) swine flu vaccine can now be offered as a travel vaccine for those travelling to Southern Hemisphere. This follows the recommendation made by the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI) that the monovalent H1N1 vaccine could be offered as a travel vaccine for the individual benefit to those travelling to Southern Hemisphere countries during the Southern Hemisphere seasonal influenza season. This letter sets out the arrangements by which the vaccine should be offered for this purpose.

### Implementation

#### *Availability to patients via General Practice*

2. Practices should already be holding some stocks of the H1N1 vaccine in order to meet the requirements for the opportunistic vaccination of those in the existing phase one priority groups over the spring and summer. Practices can now also use these vaccine stocks to offer to members of the public as a travel vaccine, for those intending to travel to the Southern Hemisphere during their influenza season until 30 September 2010.

3. It is anticipated that most of the demand for travel use will be absorbed by vaccine stocks that are already held by GP practices. In the event that additional stocks are needed, GPs should place orders through local NHS Vaccine Holding Centres.

4. Patients in the phase one priority groups who continue to be offered vaccination opportunistically over the summer should receive vaccination free of charge in accordance with the Directed Enhanced Service (DES) or in accordance with the local agreement, even if their request is related to travel abroad.

From the Chief Medical Officer  
Dr Harry Burns MPH

24 March 2010

SGHD/CMO(2010)7

#### **For action**

Chief Executives, NHS Boards  
Boards (for distribution to  
GP Practices)  
General Practitioners  
Private Travel Clinics  
Practice Nurses  
District Nurses  
Health Visitors  
Directors of Pharmacy  
Immunisation Co-ordinators  
CPHMs  
H1N1 Vaccination Programme  
Strategic and Operational Leads  
Directors of Public Health  
Medical Directors  
Nurse Directors

#### **For information**

Specialists in  
Pharmaceutical Public Health  
Infectious Disease Consultants  
Health Protection Scotland  
Chief Executive, NHS  
Health Scotland  
NHS 24  
COSLA  
Local Authority Chief Executives  
Scottish Ambulance Service  
Community Pharmacists

#### **Further Enquiries:**

#### **Vaccine Supplies/ Pharmacy Issues**

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#### **Policy Issues**

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#### **Medical Issues**

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<http://www.scotland.gov.uk>

## **Arrangements for Charging**

5. The monovalent H1N1 swine flu vaccine is available to GP practices free of charge. ***In light of this, there should be no charge levied to the patient for the cost of the vaccine.***

6. Any charge for administering the vaccine remains a private arrangement between GP practices and their individual patients, unless the patient is eligible under the phase one groups where they are covered by the Directed Enhanced Service.

## **Travel Clinics**

7. Travel clinics operating on an NHS site can also offer this vaccine to members of the public as a travel vaccine for those intending to travel to the Southern Hemisphere during that Hemisphere's influenza season (until 30 September 2010). Vaccine will also be provided to these clinics free of charge and clinics should contact the local Health Board Vaccine Holding Centres (VHCs) to discuss requirements for quantity of vaccine and arrangements for delivery. Patients receiving the vaccination should only be subject to an administration charge as outlined at paragraph 6 and not be charged for the vaccine itself.

8. Discussions on making the H1N1 vaccine available to private travel clinics are ongoing, and we will contact the private travel vaccine sector once arrangements have been finalised.

9. For further information on the Southern Hemisphere influenza season and Southern Hemisphere countries, please refer to either <http://www.travax.nhs.uk> (website aimed at health professionals) or [www.fitfortravel.nhs.uk](http://www.fitfortravel.nhs.uk) (aimed at the general public).

## **Conclusion**

9. Thank you for your ongoing commitment to the delivery of the vaccination programme. I welcome your support in offering the vaccine to travellers as another strand of protection in the continued efforts against the virus over the coming months.

Yours sincerely

*Harry Burns*

**Dr Harry Burns**