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SECRETARY

JOHN AUERBACH  
COMMISSIONER

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts  
Executive Office of Health and Human Services  
Department of Public Health  
Office of Emergency Medical Services  
99 Chauncy Street, 11th Floor  
Boston, MA 02111  
(617) 753-7300  
Fax: (617) 753-7320  
[www.mass.gov/dph/oems](http://www.mass.gov/dph/oems)

**MEMORANDUM**

To: All MA Ambulances Services  
From: Abdullah Rehayem, Director, DPH/OEMS  
Mary Clark, Director, DPH/Emergency Preparedness  
Re: Department Project to Provide H1N1 Vaccine for EMT Workforce Protection  
Date: September 21, 2009

The Massachusetts Department of Public Health, through its Emergency Preparedness Bureau, Bureau of Health Care Quality and Safety, Office of Emergency Medical Services, and Bureau of Infectious Diseases, together with the five Regional EMS Councils, have developed a plan to provide H1N1 flu vaccine to ambulance services to offer to their working EMTs, to protect them against the pandemic H1N1 virus.

As you know, the Department's Public Health Council has approved emergency amendments to the Drug Control Program regulations, effective September 14, 2009, that authorize paramedics to administer flu vaccine, through their paramedic-licensed ambulance service and its medical director, in accordance with an OEMS Special Protocol and training, for the duration of the Commissioner's Order. Information about these regulatory amendments, including the amendments themselves, can be found at [http://www.mass.gov/?pageID=eohhs2terminal&L=5&L0=Home&L1=Government&L2=Laws%2c+Regulations+and+Policies&L3=Department+of+Public+Health+Regulations+%26+Policies&L4=Proposed+Amendments+to+Regulations&sid=Eeohhs2&b=terminalcontent&f=dph\\_legal\\_vaccine&csid=Eeohhs2](http://www.mass.gov/?pageID=eohhs2terminal&L=5&L0=Home&L1=Government&L2=Laws%2c+Regulations+and+Policies&L3=Department+of+Public+Health+Regulations+%26+Policies&L4=Proposed+Amendments+to+Regulations&sid=Eeohhs2&b=terminalcontent&f=dph_legal_vaccine&csid=Eeohhs2). This authorization allows Paramedics to administer both H1N1 and seasonal flu vaccines, working at flu clinics in communities, through their ambulance service. The purpose here was to expand the pool of vaccine administrators available to work at community flu clinics to vaccinate the public against flu. Remember that paramedics may only work at these flu clinics pursuant to a request made to their ambulance service. No paramedic may administer flu vaccine independent of their ambulance service.

The H1N1 EMS workforce protection plan involves dispensing H1N1 vaccine through the Regional EMS Councils to the ambulance services in their region for administration to working EMTs free of charge. In order to facilitate this, services have already been asked, and if they haven't already, should immediately submit, employee lists to their Regional EMS Council offices, so that the appropriate number of vaccine doses can be ordered. This plan would use the newly authorized Paramedics as vaccine administrators. Of course, paramedics working for ambulance services will need to complete training in flu vaccine administration, as they would to be authorized to work in the flu clinics, in accordance with the OEMS

Special Protocol. The Regional EMS Councils will be holding train-the-trainer sessions for this training: Once a paramedic has completed this training, they can return to their services and train their fellow paramedic colleagues at the service, in accordance with the slides and curriculum used at the Regional EMS Council training they attended. Paramedics who complete this training will then be authorized to vaccinate EMTs employed by their services. Ambulance services licensed at the basic or intermediate level of service can arrange to have their EMTs vaccinated by the paramedics at the paramedic-licensed service providing mutual aid/intercept services to them.

All the training, vaccine and supplies will be provided at no cost to the ambulance services. In addition, the federal PREP Act (Public Readiness and Emergency Preparedness Act) provides broad liability protection to all authorized providers for H1N1 related vaccination activities. Ambulance services will not be permitted to run flu clinics or charge for vaccinations. This workforce protection program is simply for the purpose of making the H1N1 vaccine available to all working EMTs on a priority basis, to protect the EMS system's workforce during this flu season.

In the documents sent to Paramedic-licensed ambulance services about the emergency regulatory amendments and the authorization for Paramedics (as well as pharmacists, dentists and nursing and medical students) to administer flu vaccine for the duration of the Commissioner's Order, there was a Guidance document that explained implementation issues. In that document, it stated that ambulance services could ensure their Paramedics were appropriately trained in one of two ways, to be authorized to administer seasonal or H1N1 flu to the public at flu clinics: either 1) by holding trainings at the service, in conjunction with their medical director, in accordance with OEMS guidelines, or 2) by sending their Paramedics to DPH-run trainings for the newly authorized expanded pool of vaccinators, at no charge. A schedule of these trainings, which begin next week, and registration for these trainings, is available at <http://guest.cvent.com/i.aspx?6T,J5,1fb51866-b3df-4031-a1c0-203d92c4614b>. For paramedic-level ambulance services that choose the first option, to do their trainings in house, the "OEMS guidelines" in accordance with which these trainings must be run are the Regional EMS Council sponsored train-the-trainer sessions for the H1N1 workforce protection program. That is, the ambulance service can only hold in-house flu vaccination training for its paramedics if they have sent a paramedic to complete the Regional EMS Council's train-the-trainer session, and that paramedic conducts the in-house training at the service using the slides and curriculum from that train-the-trainer session. The Regional Councils are setting classes up now and dates will be available this week.

Thank you for your cooperation with the Department's and Regional EMS Council's flu protection efforts. If you have any questions, please contact Abdullah Rehayem, at [abdullah.rehayem@state.ma.us](mailto:abdullah.rehayem@state.ma.us) or by calling 617-753-7300.