



UPSTATE MEDICAL UNIVERSITY

EDUCATION · HEALTHCARE · RESEARCH

Office of the President & Health System CEO

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To the Upstate Community:

Gov. Andrew Cuomo has declared a public health emergency and issued an Executive Order to combat the widespread flu epidemic in New York. The order, issued yesterday, expressly gives pharmacists the ability to administer flu vaccinations to children between ages 2 and 18. The move comes as flu diagnosis and hospitalizations have climbed to their highest level statewide since reporting for flu cases began in 2004.

The Centers for Disease Control reported that the current flu season is on track to be one of the worst in 15 years. The flu season is especially severe for children with 37 pediatric deaths reported so far across the nation. Children's exposure comes from adults and other children. **As a reminder, those under six months cannot be vaccinated so must rely on the protection conveyed by others who can be immunized.** The Governor urges all New Yorkers to help combat this quick-spreading strain of flu and make sure they and their loved ones are vaccinated.

The Governor also ordered the following actions to protect New Yorkers from influenza and ensure health care system capacity:

--Issuance of Department of Financial Services guidance to health insurers to ensure that prior authorization is not a barrier to the prescribing of antiviral medications within the first 48 hours of illness.

--Direct engagement with all New York State county health commissioners to review the four key strategies of influenza control- vaccination, rapid antiviral treatment, isolation of sick individuals, and good hand hygiene--and promote local vaccination awareness efforts.

--Ongoing communication with all New York State hospitals and nursing homes to review capacity management strategies and the actions available to expand capacity to handle patient surge.

--Continued monitoring of hospital capacity through survey and direct outreach to hospital leadership.

Upstate has seen a significant number of cases of flu. This year, throughout the Upstate health system—clinics, emergency departments, campuses—**more than 330 cases of the flu have been confirmed**, compared to last year at this time, when Upstate registered 77 confirmed cases.

Flu vaccine remains available for members of the Upstate Community and we urge you to get vaccinated. Vaccine is available at the Downtown Campus Employee Student Health Office, Jacobsen Hall, Fourth Floor, (315) 464-4260 or at the Community Campus Employee Health Office (315-492-5624).

Please ensure that you are not putting others at risk and get vaccinated for the flu.

A copy of the Governor's Executive Order is here:

https://www.governor.ny.gov/sites/governor.ny.gov/files/atoms/files/EO_176.pdf



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