



THE SECRETARY OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20201

December 31, 2009

Dear Colleague:

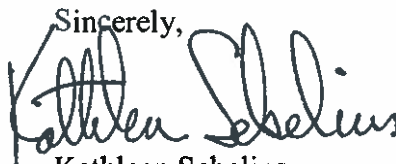
We are at a critical moment in the fight against the 2009 H1N1 influenza. Between April and mid-November, we saw approximately 47 million cases of 2009 H1N1 flu, more than 200,000 hospitalizations, and nearly 10,000 deaths, with the vast majority of deaths occurring in children and non-elderly adults. While we are fortunate that flu activity has declined in recent weeks, flu activity – caused either by the 2009 H1N1 virus or regular seasonal flu viruses – is expected to continue for months. Flu experts warn that we should prepare for a possible third wave of H1N1 flu.

The number of people who get vaccinated against influenza typically drops after November. With more than 118 million doses of the H1N1 flu vaccine having been made available, and with flu illness declining in many areas, Americans who have not yet been vaccinated have a window of opportunity to protect themselves and their loved ones. Encouraging more people to get vaccinated over the next several weeks could prevent serious illness and death. That's why the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) has designated January 10-16 as National Influenza Vaccination Week.

During National Influenza Vaccination Week, HHS and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) will be spearheading a nationwide effort to urge more Americans to get vaccinated against H1N1. We hope you will help us spread this important message through outreach activities, vaccination clinics, or other events to promote the H1N1 vaccine and communicate that it is safe, effective, and our best defense against the flu.

Please share your plans for National Influenza Vaccination Week with us at www.Flu.gov/getvaccinated, where we will post events and activities happening all around the country. This website also has information to help you build your own event, as well as print materials, public service announcements, and website tools to help you spread the message about the importance of getting the H1N1 vaccine.

Thank you for everything you do. We look forward to working together to urge more Americans to get vaccinated during National Influenza Vaccination Week.

Sincerely,

Kathleen Sebelius