



State of New Jersey

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND SENIOR SERVICES
DIVISION OF EPIDEMIOLOGY, ENVIRONMENTAL AND OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH
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JON S. CORZINE
Governor

www.nj.gov/health

HEATHER HOWARD
Commissioner

October 9, 2009

Dear Healthcare Provider:

Many healthcare providers are currently vaccinating their patients against seasonal influenza and are preparing to receive the 2009 influenza A (H1N1) monovalent vaccine. Vaccines against the influenza virus and other pathogens have played a major role in preventing infectious disease-related morbidity and mortality. As a healthcare provider, you can help monitor the safety of vaccines by promptly and accurately reporting any clinically significant adverse event that occurs following vaccination to the Vaccine Adverse Event Reporting System (VAERS). Clinically significant adverse events are those events that are of concern to you or your vaccinated patients or their caregivers. Please report clinically significant adverse events after vaccination, whether or not you administered the vaccine and even if you are not sure if the vaccine caused the adverse event.

VAERS is a US vaccine safety surveillance system, co-managed by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the Food and Drug Administration (FDA). VAERS is the front-line monitoring system for collecting and analyzing voluntary reports of adverse events following vaccination. CDC and FDA analyze VAERS reports to identify potential vaccine safety concerns that may need further study or public health action.

There are three ways to report to VAERS which are outlined on the VAERS website at <http://vaers.hhs.gov/esub/index>:

- 1) Submit the report online via the secure website,
- 2) Fax a completed VAERS form to 877-721-0366, or
- 3) Mail a completed VAERS form to VAERS, P.O. Box 1100, Rockville, MD 20849-1100.

A VAERS form may be downloaded from the VAERS website at http://vaers.hhs.gov/resources/vaers_form.pdf. Alternatively, you may request a VAERS form by sending an email to info@vaers.org, by calling toll-free 800-822-7967, or by sending a faxed request to 877-721-0366. For additional information on VAERS or vaccine safety, visit the VAERS website at <http://vaers.hhs.gov/index> or call 800-822-7967.

The VAERS website may also be accessed through the New Jersey Immunization Information System (NJIS) at <http://njiis.nj.gov/njiis/>. From the main NJIS page, click on "NJIS Forms/Documents." The website is also available for users through the H1N1 Vaccine System at <http://njiis.nj.gov/njiis/jsp/h1n1home.jsp>.

When submitting a report to VAERS, please include as much information requested on the form as possible to assist VAERS staff analyze and follow-up of the adverse event. For example, please include information about vaccination location, date, vaccine type, lot number and dose. The form also includes a space to provide contact information for the person reporting the adverse event.

Influenza vaccination record cards to provide to vaccinated individuals, also available at <http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/vaccination/slv/pdf/h1n1vaxrecord.pdf>, will be given to healthcare providers who administer 2009 influenza A (H1N1) monovalent vaccine. The information on this card may be helpful in completing a VAERS report for an adverse event that occurred after 2009 H1N1 or seasonal influenza vaccines. Vaccination records for individuals receiving the 2009 influenza A (H1N1) monovalent vaccine will also be available through the H1N1 Vaccine System.

Thank you in advance for your support of our immunization programs. Together we can ensure that vaccination continues to be as safe as possible.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Barbara Montana". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Barbara Montana, MD, MPH, FACP
Medical Director
Communicable Disease Service