

Update on the 2009 H1N1 Flu Pandemic

March 26, 2010

As we approach the end of March, I wanted to remind all of you that Governor Strickland's emergency proclamation of October 7, 2009 will be terminated on **March 31, 2010 at 11:59 PM**. Following this date and time, the administration of vaccinations by Ohio EMS personnel will be outside the Ohio EMS scope of practice; and therefore, strictly prohibited.

Despite the termination of the emergency proclamation, I continue to encourage EMS personnel to get vaccinated against the H1N1 influenza virus, perform diligent hand washing before and after all contacts, and to don the appropriate level of personal protective equipment (PPE) for all patient encounters. The H1N1 influenza resource materials, including the *Vaccinations for Ohio EMS Personnel* training module, remain posted on the Ohio Department of Public Safety, Division of EMS website at www.ems.ohio.gov for your utilization and review.

During their last meeting, I was pleased to inform the EMS Board that I received an accepted an invitation from the Institute of Medicine of the National Academies (IOM) to participate as a speaker and panelist during their H1N1 vaccination campaign workshop next month. The IOM is a prominent advisor to our national leaders, and others around the globe, during the creation of scientific and health care policies and initiatives. Ohio's initiatives during the H1N1 mass vaccination campaign and the positive impact that they produced for our communities at the local level will be included in my presentation to the IOM's Forum on Medical and Public Health Preparedness for Catastrophic Events.

Although I am honored and humbled to have been selected by the IOM, this rare and prestigious invitation is certainly not directed toward me as an individual, but is the reflective of the exemplary work completed by each of you and all of our partners in Ohio's emergency care system. In addition to the Ohio Department of Public Safety's Division of EMS, I have been provided invaluable input from the Ohio Department of Health, the Ohio Emergency Management Agency, and the Ohio Hospital Association. I also met with the emergency preparedness leadership in Lake County, where I reside, practice emergency medicine, and serve as the EMS medical director for Lake Health, to prepare the local impact portion of my IOM presentation as our local vaccination campaign had significant participation from EMS personnel.

Upon a preliminary assessment, EMS personnel clearly had a positive impact during Ohio's H1N1 influenza mass vaccination campaign. During my meeting with the organizations that partnered with my Lake Health EMS agencies, the testimonials from the individuals in our communities made it crystal clear that the participation of EMS personnel provided more than simply manpower for the performance of intramuscular injections. EMS providers facilitated the communications about clinic locations to homes and schools, assisted the management of crowds waiting in line for vaccinations, and