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## Initial H1N1 Flu Vaccine Supply to Trickle In

Texas Department of State Health Services officials report that the amount of H1N1 flu vaccine available for the state over the next few weeks will be low and are urging the public and health care providers waiting for it to be patient.

“We’ve been told that we’ll have about 15 million doses for Texas after all is said and done, but it won’t be available all at once,” said Dr. David Lakey, DSHS commissioner. “The vaccine will trickle in week to week, especially at first. It’s a fluid situation driven primarily by how much vaccine the manufacturers produce each week.”

He said some 3.4 million doses of the vaccine had been projected for Texas by mid-October, but the latest estimates are that no more than 1.7 million doses will be available by then. Weekly allotments are expected to be larger after mid-October.

Some 12,000 doctors and other health care providers in Texas have signed up to provide the vaccine.

Starting this week, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention will tell DSHS and other states’ health departments how much vaccine is available for them to order for the week. DSHS then tells the CDC where to send it based on provider registration information, priority groups, vaccine formulation, geography and other factors. It may be one to two weeks later before that vaccine is in the hands of providers.

“All of us will have to be patient and flexible as we meet this challenge,” Lakey said. “For example, pregnant women are one of the highest priority groups for vaccination, but the first vaccine available to us is FluMist. Pregnant women should not receive FluMist.”

He said the first week’s allocation of about 237,000 doses of FluMist will go to registered providers to give to children 2 and 3 years of age. Children are another high priority group.

Lakey said the total of 15 million doses should be enough vaccine to meet anticipated demand in Texas but that it could be late January before all doses are received. He reminded Texans to get the seasonal flu shot, cover coughs and sneezes, wash hands often and stay home if sick.