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**STATE PUBLIC HEALTH OFFICER AMENDS ORDER RESTRICTING FLU VACCINE**

Dr. Richard Jackson, State Public Health Officer, said today that the public health order that currently restricts influenza vaccine to vulnerable citizens has been amended to expand the eligibility criteria. "Some individuals who are eligible for a flu shot may have decided not to get one this year because of limited supplies early in the season," Jackson said.

"Since the national crisis with the influenza vaccine shortage began, our primary focus has been to ensure that our most vulnerable citizens and healthcare workers had access to a limited vaccine supply," Dr. Feldman, Public Health Officer for Riverside County said.

Clinicians should now also focus on vaccinating other priority groups that would be protected in a typical season, including individuals aged 50 or older, people that live with a family member that has a chronic disease, teachers, police officers, firefighters, and a broader range of healthcare workers," said Feldman. Flu vaccine is available for providers to order for their eligible patients. Providers are encouraged to order vaccine and recall eligible patients. The California Department of Health Services (CDHS) has been working closely with local health departments and medical providers to ensure that those in greatest need are able to receive flu vaccine.

Individuals in the following groups are eligible to receive the flu vaccine:

- All children ages 6-23 months.
- All adults 50-years of age and older.
- Individuals ages 2-64 with underlying chronic medical conditions.
- All women who will be pregnant during influenza season.
- Residents in nursing homes and long-term care facilities.
- Children 6-months to 18-years of age receiving chronic aspirin therapy.
- Household contacts of persons belonging to any of the priority groups listed above.
- Out-of-home caregivers and household contacts of children less than 6-months of age.
- Healthcare workers involved with direct patient care.
- Emergency service workers, such as law enforcement, firefighters and paramedics.

In addition, Riverside County residents are to take the following steps to help prevent the spread of respiratory illnesses:

- Cover your mouth and nose with a tissue when coughing or sneezing. Properly dispose of used tissues.
- Wash your hands with soap and warm water or a hand sanitizer to help protect yourself from germs and avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth.
- Stay healthy by eating nutritious foods, drinking plenty of water, exercising, getting plenty of rest and not smoking.
- Stay home when you are sick to avoid infecting your co-workers and friends.

For information on flu vaccine availability call Disease Control at 1-888-246-1215 or the Riverside County [Family Health Center](#) near you.

