



New Mexico Secretary of Health Michelle Lujan Grisham Lifts Public Health Order Restricting Access to Flu Vaccine

Governor praises Health Department response to vaccine shortage

For Immediate Release
January 18, 2005

Contact: Pahl Shipley
505.476.2202

SANTA FE- New Mexico Secretary of Health Michelle Lujan Grisham today lifted the Public health Order restricting access to the flu vaccine, making flu shots available to any New Mexican who wishes to be vaccinated.

“Because of Secretary Grisham’s quick actions when the vaccine shortage was first announced, New Mexico has been able to protect our most at-risk citizens, and we’re now able to offer every citizen the opportunity to get a flu shot,” said Governor Richardson. “We were the first state in the country to take control of our supplies of vaccine to protect our seniors, children, and others in danger of complications from the flu. Secretary Grisham and her staff have done an excellent job identifying additional supplies of vaccine, and have worked tirelessly with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and others to make sure New Mexico got the vaccine we needed.”

Secretary Grisham said that while anyone can now get a flu shot, her department is reserving a supply of vaccine for those identified as “at-risk”.

“We are happy and relieved that the flu season has been relatively mild so far,” Grisham said. “Despite that, a case of the flu can cause serious health problems for older people or those with chronic health problems. The Health Department is still encouraging those who fall in the high-risk categories to get a flu shot as soon as possible.”

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention announced Oct. 5 that Chiron Corp. would not be providing about 50 million doses of flu vaccine because of contamination

issues. This amounted to half the vaccine the United States was expecting for the upcoming flu season. The other 55 million doses, produced by Aventis Pasteur, were unaffected by this problem.

Despite the shortage, New Mexico has been able to obtain vaccine from various sources. As of Dec. 10, the state had received 479,620 doses of adult and children's vaccine. Public and private health providers have reported to the Department of Health that vaccine is available around the state.

People who have medical providers should contact them about vaccine availability in their area. People without healthcare providers, health insurance, or who cannot get information from their provider can contact a public health office. To find the number of a public health office, call 800-432-6866 or go to www.health.state.nm.us.

#30#