



## LOUISIANA DEPARTMENT OF INSURANCE

JAMES J. DONELON  
COMMISSIONER

October 23, 2009

Dear Health Insurance Issuer:

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the Louisiana Department of Health and Hospitals (LDHH) is concerned that the new H1N1 influenza virus could result in a particularly severe 2009-2010 flu season. Vaccines are the best tool to prevent influenza. The H1N1 vaccine will be procured and purchased by the federal government and made available to all vaccinators at no cost. However, the CDC is allowing providers to charge an administration fee for provision of the vaccine delivery. LDHH strongly encourages private health insurance issuers to commit to providing coverage for the administration fee of the H1N1 vaccine.

CDC contacted America's Health Insurance Plans (AHIP) concerning this matter and on behalf of its members AHIP provided the following recommendation: "Every year health plans contribute to the seasonal flu vaccination campaign in several ways: Just as health plans have provided extensive coverage for the administration of seasonal flu vaccines in the past, public health planners can make the assumption that health plans will provide reimbursement for the administration of H1N1 vaccine to their members by private sector providers in both traditional settings e.g., doctor's office, ambulatory clinics, health care facilities, and in non-traditional settings, where contracts with insurers have been established."

The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services has decided that it will also cover the administration fee (\$15-\$20) for influenza vaccine for their beneficiaries, at the same rate they pay for the administration of seasonal influenza vaccine. They also report there will be no coinsurance or copayment applied to this benefit, and beneficiaries will not have to meet their deductible. In addition, the Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association announced a system-wide commitment of providing coverage for the administration fee of the H1N1 vaccine.

The vaccine is expected to be available this fall and the CDC has recommended that certain groups of the population receive the 2009 H1N1 vaccine first. Vaccination efforts will initially focus on five target groups, but later will expand to all persons. Additional information about the H1N1 vaccine and related materials can be found on the CDC Web site at [www.cdc.gov](http://www.cdc.gov) and on the Louisiana Web site at [www.flula.com](http://www.flula.com).

As Commissioner of Insurance I strongly urge all health insurance issuers to pay the administrative fee and waive copayments, deductibles and any coinsurance for the influenza vaccinations, which will remove cost barriers for immunization to many citizens of Louisiana.

With best wishes and kindest personal regards, I remain

Very truly yours,



James J. Donelon  
Commissioner of Insurance

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JJDOCT2009.2732