



## **THE GOVERNMENT OF NORFOLK ISLAND**

### **MEDIA RELEASE**

## **Norfolk Island allocated limited stocks of Human Swine Influenza vaccine**

The Norfolk Island Government Swine Influenza Task Force has met to consider the priorities for use of the 200 doses of Panvax® Influenza H1N1 vaccine, recently allocated to Norfolk Island by the Commonwealth Government. The Commonwealth has acquired all available Influenza H1N1 vaccine stocks and commercial providers cannot directly supply any further stocks to Norfolk Island even on a commercial purchase basis. The Commonwealth has agreed after some months of negotiations by Norfolk Island to release 200 doses only of the Commonwealth stocks for which Norfolk Island is grateful. These stocks have now been received in Norfolk Island.

At all stages of the discussions, Norfolk Island has indicated that it is prepared to buy the Panvax® vaccine either from the Commonwealth or from the manufacturer.

The Norfolk Island Government has repeated its request for access to more doses so that Norfolk Island can assist the Commonwealth Minister for Health and Ageing to fulfill the promise made on 24 September that all Australians would have access to the vaccine and that "there are enough doses to vaccinate everyone".

Given the limited stocks of vaccine currently available, the Swine Influenza Task Force has decided to base initial eligibility for vaccinations on the guidelines for published by the Australian Department of Health and Ageing, which listed the following priority groups:

- Front line health care and community care workers who have direct contact with patients;
- People with underlying chronic medical conditions such as asthma, cancers, HIV, heart disease, diabetes, and chronic kidney failure;
- People who are obese with a body mass index over 35;
- Indigenous people and remote and isolated communities with indigenous people;
- Children in special schools, initially only 10 years and over until child safety data is available; and
- Pregnant women and parents and guardians of children aged 0-6 months.

The Medical Superintendent and Norfolk Island Hospital Director, in consultation with medical and professional staff, are compiling a list of persons in Norfolk Island within the priority groups. The Hospital is making arrangements to commence vaccinations immediately for anyone in those categories who wishes to be inoculated.

The Swine Flu Task force has determined that H1N1 vaccinations will be voluntary and that persons within the priority list categories will be subject to medical assessment and medical authorisation of the vaccine injection. Due to the vaccine doses being supplied in multi-dose vials, the vaccinations will likely occur in groups of 10 persons at a time.

The Task Force decided that once all persons in priority groups had been vaccinated, if any Panvax® vaccine remained, vaccinations would be offered to persons aged over 10 ordinarily resident in Norfolk Island. In accordance with Norfolk Island practice and legislation, such vaccinations would be voluntary and free of charge, even if the hospital had to purchase the Panvax® vaccine. Persons wishing more information or concerned as to any risks or issues regarding the vaccine and the risks involved should consult their own medical practitioner or the websites for the Commonwealth Department of Health and Ageing, the World Health Organisation or Panvax® vaccine manufacturers.

In the event that there is not enough Panvax® available for all seeking vaccination, the hospital will compile a list for future inoculations when and if more stocks can be obtained. Community members who consider they are in the above priority list and who desire assessment to obtain the vaccine should contact the hospital for an appointment.

The Norfolk Island Government emphasizes that the provision of the vaccine is on a voluntary basis and no warranty or guarantee whatsoever is given by the Government as to the suitability or effectiveness of the vaccine in regard to prevention of Pandemic Influenza H1N1 or any influenza virus in any person or group of persons. The vaccine is not a treatment or cure.

Further information on the Human Swine Influenza is available on the Australian Government's National Influenza Hotline on 08 84028833, which Norfolk Island residents can call free of charge. Regular information updates and reports are also available from the National Health Emergency website at [www.healthemergency.gov.au](http://www.healthemergency.gov.au).

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