



# Dickinson-Iron District Health Department

## Dickinson County

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BRANCH OFFICE

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## Iron County

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MAIN OFFICE

October 2, 2009

Dear Clinician:

As we enter flu season, we are writing to remind you about the anti-viral medication available to your patients, free-of-charge, through the Strategic National Stockpile. The health department has placed both Tamiflu and Relenza at the local pharmacies listed below. These pharmacies have agreed to dispense these anti-virals according to CDC guidance and are doing so without reimbursement, as a service to the community. In order to access these medications, simply utilize the following process:

- Write anti-viral prescriptions for the suspected case per CDC guidance. This guidance may be found at: <http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/recommendations.htm>. Please note that the CDC guidance on anti-virals has changed since the beginning of the pandemic. Otherwise healthy individuals between 5 and 64 years of age with mild illness will generally not require treatment. Prompt treatment with anti-virals is generally recommended for hospitalized patients and high risk individuals. Prophylactic anti-viral use for high-risk individuals who are in close contact with suspected or confirmed cases may be replaced, in many instances, with prompt treatment, if and when symptoms develop. The guidance goes into some detail on management of children under 5 years of age.
- If you are prescribing according to CDC guidance and would like the patient to receive anti-virals from the SNS, free-of-charge, **please write "SNS" on the script.**
- If you are prescribing for indications other than those outlined by the CDC (ex. prophylaxing non-high risk individuals), do not indicate SNS on your prescription and your patient may obtain their medication from any pharmacy's retail stock.
- If the patient is accessing SNS anti-virals, please refer them to one of the following pharmacies:
  - The Drug Store (Iron Mountain - 906-774-3654)
  - Norway Pharmacy (Norway- 906-563-5151)
  - Crystal Falls Health Mart Pharmacy (Crystal Falls, 906-875-3601)
  - The Corner Drug Store (Iron River, 906-265-2312)
- Continue to educate patients about home isolation for 24 hours after fever abates, without the aid of antipyretic medications.

The health department has also recently sent out revised guidance from the Michigan Department of Community Health on laboratory testing for H1N1 this fall. This guidance may be found at:

[http://www.michigan.gov/documents/mdch/Clinician\\_guidance\\_influenza\\_testing\\_algorithm\\_289033\\_7.pdf](http://www.michigan.gov/documents/mdch/Clinician_guidance_influenza_testing_algorithm_289033_7.pdf)

Please note that the state lab will accept specimens only in the following situations: severely ill hospitalized patients, severely ill pregnant women, unusual presentations such as encephalopathy, facility outbreaks and deaths. This information must be noted on the lab requisition. As you know, rapid flu test kits used for seasonal flu have low sensitivity for H1N1 and should not be used to exclude the diagnosis.

Since the overwhelming majority of individuals with flu at this time will have H1N1 (as ascertained by surveillance data), Tamiflu or Relenza may be used, if treatment is required. Should surveillance indicate increasing levels of circulating resistant strains of any flu type, anti-viral recommendations may be revised.

Please note that the health department should be made aware of all cases which meet the criteria for testing and will ensure that these are reported to the state.

Thank you for your help in ensuring that all members of the community have access to appropriate anti-viral medication and for assisting public health in addressing this novel virus. Please contact me with any questions or concerns.

Best Regards,

*Serving Baraga, Gogebic, Houghton, Keweenaw and Ontonagon Counties.*