



## Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Nebraska confirms coverage for administration of the H1N1 Vaccine

August 28, 2009 (Omaha, NE) – Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Nebraska confirmed today that it will provide coverage for the administration of the H1N1 (swine flu) vaccine when it becomes commercially available to the general public. The vaccine administration will be covered for members whose benefit plans provide coverage for vaccines. While the federal government is paying for the H1N1 vaccine itself, providers are expected to bill separately for the administration of the shot.

Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Nebraska will also continue coverage of **seasonal** flu vaccine for those whose health plans offer vaccine coverage. The U.S Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has stated that the H1N1 vaccine is **not** intended to replace the seasonal flu vaccine. Seasonal flu and one H1N1 shot may be administered on the same day, according to the CDC. A second H1N1 shot is required three weeks later.

“The importance of being proactive during this flu season cannot be underestimated,” says Dr. Bill Minier, vice president of Medical Policy and Medical Director at Blue Cross. “By reducing barriers to the cost of getting the vaccine, we are strongly encouraging our members to avoid bringing the illness into their homes, schools and workplaces.” Dr. Minier stresses the even greater importance of simply washing your hands and covering your cough in preventing the spread of disease.

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**-Dr. Bill Minier**

Formal recommendations target five key populations for the initial administration of the vaccine:

- Pregnant women
- Those who live with or care for children younger than six months old
- Health care and emergency services personnel
- Children and young adults from six months to 24 years old
- People between 25 and 64 years old with chronic medical conditions which increase their risk of complications from the influenza infection.

The CDC currently estimates that shipping of the vaccine will begin mid-October, although there is a possibility that some vaccine will be available for shipping starting late September. For more extensive information on the H1N1 virus, please visit [www.pandemicflu.gov](http://www.pandemicflu.gov).

**For More Information, Contact Bev Carlson  
(402) 548-4328 or [bev.carlson@bcbsne.com](mailto:bev.carlson@bcbsne.com)**

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*Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Nebraska, an independent licensee of the Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association, insures or provides benefit administration to over 717,000 people. Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Nebraska is a mutual insurance company committed to delivering the health and wellness solutions that people value most. Among recent honors: The 2008 Integrity Award from the Better Business Bureau, the Platinum Well Workplace Award from the Wellness Councils of America, Top 10 Best Places to Work in Omaha and “Best of Omaha” among health insurance companies.*