



COMMONWEALTH of VIRGINIA

Karen Remley, MD, MBA, FAAP
State Health Commissioner

Department of Health
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RICHMOND, VA 23218

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November 4, 2009

Dear Emergency Medical Services Provider,

Thank you for your continued daily efforts and leadership in your community especially during ongoing response to the current pandemic event. Your continued service and collaboration is vital to protecting Virginians.

During planning for response to the pandemic event, questions have been raised regarding the use of EMS providers as vaccinators. In an effort to clarify the regulations, the Office of the Attorney General has released an opinion regarding this issue. In an October 23, 2009 response to a Virginia Delegate, the following was released:

“Accordingly, it is my opinion that emergency medical service providers may only administer vaccinations for the H1N1 flu or seasonal flu when designated and authorized by the State Health Commissioner in accordance with §§ 32.1-42.1 and 54.1-3408(P).”

With over 2800 registered H1N1 vaccinators within the Commonwealth, the Virginia Department of Health (VDH) currently expects that EMS providers will not need to be called on to serve as vaccinators and will be able to focus on the provision of emergency medical care. VDH continues to monitor the situation closely and, depending upon H1N1 vaccine quantities and demand, will continually reevaluate the need for EMS vaccinators. However, should the need arise for EMS providers to serve as vaccinators VDH has developed a training module that provides the necessary vaccination administration training for EMS providers. Upon the designation of EMS providers to serve as vaccinators, this training will become available through the agency Operational Medical Director.

It is the recommendation of the VDH that EMS providers consider joining their local Medical Reserve Corps unit in anticipation of the possibility of activation. Since an emergency designation would require EMS providers to vaccinate under the authority of the Commissioner, working with the Local Health Department via the Medical Reserve Corps provides the best liability protection and logistical support. EMS providers can register to become local Medical Reserve Corps volunteers at www.vamrc.org or for more information contact Jennifer Freeland, State Volunteer Coordinator, at jennifer.freeland@vdh.virginia.gov.

Should you have any questions please contact the Office of EMS at 804-864-7600. I look forward to our continued partnership focusing on the health of all Virginians.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Karen Remley".

Karen Remley, MD, MBA, FAAP
State Health Commissioner