



## Long Island Hospitals Discuss H1N1 Flu Readiness



*From left: Aaron Glatt MD, CEO of New Island Hospital and spokesperson for Infectious Disease Society; Dr. Linda Wenze, Emergency Preparedness Coordinator for the Nassau-Suffolk Hospital Council; Dr. Jorge Gardyn, Director of the Flu Program at Nassau University Medical Center; Dr. Thomas Kwiatkowski, Medical Director for North Shore-LIJ Center for EMS; Dr. Maria Carney, Nassau County Health Commissioner and Dr. Linda Merlmelstein, Acting Commissioner of the Suffolk County Department of Health Services.*

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(Hauppauge, NY . . . November 17, 2009) Joined by both county health commissioners and several infectious disease physicians, the Nassau-Suffolk Hospital Council (NSHC) briefed media (11/12/09) regarding the region's H1N1 flu readiness activities – vaccine availability and distribution points, surge capacity plans, and disease prevention and treatment. The briefing took place at the North Shore-LIJ Center for EMS in Syosset. County health departments, community physicians, and all hospitals are coordinated in their efforts to monitor, control, and manage the H1N1 flu epidemic, according to Dr. Linda Wenze, emergency preparedness coordinator for the NSHC, the organization that represents Long Island's not-for-profit and public hospitals.

At this time, the Centers for Disease Control's surveillance monitors report widespread H1N1 flu in the Long Island area with most of the cases appearing in the community as opposed to the hospital setting. Infectious disease experts and public health officials continue to urge Long Islanders to practice good illness prevention techniques such as hand washing and covered coughs and to remain home from work or school if flu symptoms arise. Based on availability, H1N1 vaccination is encouraged, with high risk groups identified by the CDC receiving the vaccine first.

Long Islanders should check regularly with the county health departments and/or their local hospitals for availability of H1N1 vaccine. For hospitals call the Public Information office; for Suffolk County call 631-787-2200 and for Nassau County call 1-888-684-4271.

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