



DDC's Defense Distribution Depot Susquehanna, Pa. ships 1 millionth dose of H1N1 vaccine

By Stacy L. Umstead, DDC Public Affairs

The Defense Distribution Depot Susquehanna, Pa., or DDSP, the Department of Defense's largest distribution facility, shipped its one millionth dose of the Influenza A, H1N1, influenza vaccine.

With a long-standing partnership with the Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense-Health Affairs, the Defense Logistics Agency's lead center for distribution, the Defense Distribution Center, plays a key role in receiving, storing and distributing the H1N1 influenza vaccines, as well as other anti-viral pharmaceuticals, destined to military service members.

"Since mid-October, DDSP has been processing the H1N1 vaccines and ancillary kits destined to military units, Department of Defense civilians and beneficiaries located outside the continental United States," said Michael Minto, Medical and Chemical Biology program manager for the Defense Distribution Center.

Almost 3.6 million doses of H1N1 vaccine are estimated to be processed through DDSP this flu season, "The total vaccines in support of the H1N1 will more than double that of the seasonal vaccine," said Minto.

Packaging the vaccines for transport is one key element to the distribution process. "Vaccine is required to be maintained at the temperature of two to eight degrees Celsius at all times, to include during the transport process," said Minto.

The vaccines are received from the manufacturers using refrigerated vans.

When DDSP receives the Materiel Release Order, or MRO, the order is pulled and packaged in accordance with Department of Defense-approved cold chain management protocols.

Flu vaccine is packed according to one of three protocols. The protocol is developed based on the ambient temperature at the receiving site. Interior temperatures are maintained by varying the number and placement of frozen and refrigerated gel packs.

"By using specialized packaging, we ensure the vaccine is maintained within the mandated temperature range," said Minto. "In addition, each package contains a digital temperature monitoring device to capture and record temperature data."

Historically, DDSP has been the primary shipper of influenza vaccine for the services with almost 9 million doses shipped within the last four years.

Completion timeframes for this year's H1N1 vaccine distribution remain fluid based on the manufacturer's production of the vaccine.



Influenza A (H1N1) vaccine