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Sebelius: Americans must get swine flu shot

Health secretary urges mass inoculation, calling vaccine 'safe and secure'

AP Associated Press

updated 2 hours, 27 minutes ago


WASHINGTON - [Health](#) and Human Services Secretary Kathleen Sebelius appealed anew Wednesday for widespread inoculation against a surging swine flu threat, calling the vaccine "safe and secure."

Sebelius unconditionally vouched for the safety of the vaccine, saying it "has been made exactly the same way seasonal vaccine has been made, year in and year out."

Appearing on morning news shows to step up the Obama administration's campaign for vaccinations, Sebelius said that "the adverse effects are minimal. ... We know it's safe and secure. ... This is definitely is a safe vaccine for people to get."

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Sebelius was asked on CNN about surveys showing many parents were wary of getting their children vaccinated for fear the vaccine has been too hastily prepared and wasn't safe. She replied that it was targeted specifically at the H1N1 virus and was "right on target with an immune response."

The HHS secretary appeared as new cases of the flu, particularly among younger people, have been appearing recently. Some 600 people have

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Sebelius: 'Definitely is a safe vaccine'

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died so far from the flu in this country, and the government has targeted roughly 90,000 sites to receive the swine [flu vaccine](#) by the end of this month.

"This flu is a younger person's flu," Sebelius said on NBC's "Today" show. "Kids have no immunity to the flu ... children are great carriers of bugs and viruses."

Because of the danger of easy transmission, especially in school and day-care settings, Sebelius said, "We strongly urge parents to take precautionary steps. Flu kills every year ... and we've got a great vaccine to deal with it."

"There's going to be plenty of vaccine," the secretary said. "It's rolling off the production lines right now ... ahead of schedule, and that's good news... By the end of October we should have a substantial amount available and begin to vaccinate a wider population of folks."

Said Sebelius:

"There's no question the disease is out there, which is why today we're rolling out PSAs (public service announcements) ... to make sure people take steps to help prevent the spread of the disease, and in the meantime we will push the vaccine out as quickly as we get it off the production lines."

Video



Hospitals brace for tough flu season

NEWS Oct. 7: Hospitals across the U.S. are gearing up for a busy flu season as Americans rush to get their seasonal flu shots and await more access to the swine flu vaccination. NBC's Tom Costello reports.

Today show

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Appearing on CBS's "The Early Show," she said the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the President's Advisory Committee on Immunizations have identified five target populations: pregnant women, [health care](#) workers, children with underlying health conditions ages 6 months to 24 years, older Americans with underlying health conditions.

"That's a lot of people," Sebelius said. "That's about half the population."

"By the end of this week," she added, "we'll begin to have injectable vaccine also available. We're dealing with five production companies. That's very good news. But the vaccine will become available as the lines clear up. So as soon as we have any vaccine available, we're pushing it out to 90,000 sites around the country. The early going is a little bumpy but we'll have a good supply by October."

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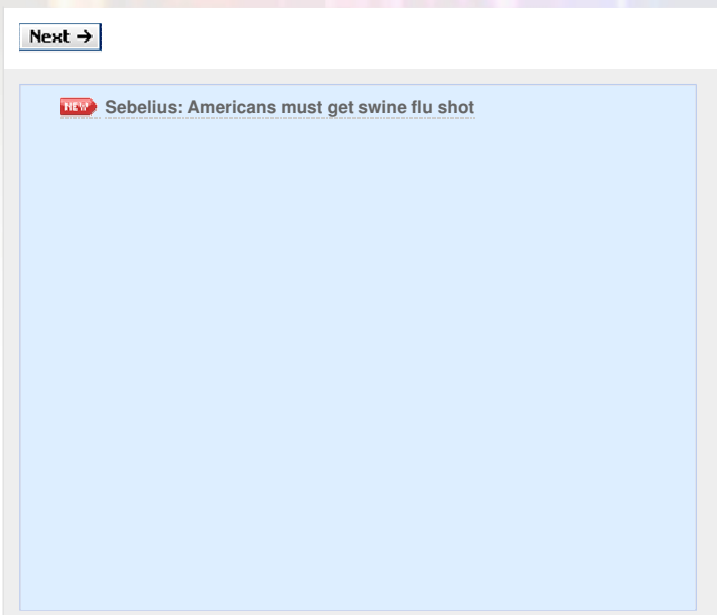
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