

# Glen Abbot Ltd.

## Swine Flu Briefing 35 – 27/09/2009

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### Current Situation:

The number of cases continues to increase at a rapid rate albeit from a low base, so the overall numbers are still low.

In England the figure for last week is 9,000 compared to 5,000 and 3,000 in previous weeks. In Scotland the figures rose from some 6,100 to 7,000.

European healthcare regulators recommended two swine flu vaccines for approval on Friday. The European Medicines Agency (EMA) said its expert committee on new drugs gave the go-ahead for the first H1N1 swine flu vaccines from GlaxoSmithKline and Novartis, called Pandemrix and Focetria.

The European Commission still need to give its approval but there are strenuous efforts to make sure this does not delay the availability.

Baxter, the manufacturer of the other potential vaccine, did not gain approval. The EMA cited quality problems.


Will it be two vaccinations or one? Well the EMA has said the following:

*"The Committee is currently recommending a two-dose vaccination schedule, at an interval of three weeks, for adults, including pregnant women, and children from six months of age. The Committee acknowledged that there are preliminary data suggesting that one dose may be sufficient in adults. The Agency is expecting further data from ongoing clinical studies over the coming months and these recommendations may be updated."*

And will it be safe? *"Decades of experience with seasonal influenza vaccines indicate that insertion of a new strain in a vaccine should not substantially affect the safety or level of protection offered," the agency said in a statement.*

In the UK at least there seems to be doubts about just how many people will actually take the vaccine. NHS (the UK health service) staff have a reputation for having some of the lowest take up levels.

The U.S. government said this week it will have 6 million to 7 million doses of swine flu vaccine ready next week, and another 40 million does by mid- to late October.



The first batch of people to receive vaccinations against the swine flu, a group of students in China, has reported no serious side effects, Chinese officials said.

### **The schools are back....**

The Chief Medical Officer in England, Sir Liam Donaldson said,

“Everything suggests that we’re starting to see a second wave to follow on from the July peak. We don’t know how big that wave is going to be, but we’re reaching the starting line.”

There have been outbreaks in schools in 8 out of 10 regions in England.

### **Why are healthy people over 65 and children not a priority for the swine flu vaccine?**

Healthy people aged over 65 appear to have some natural immunity to the swine flu virus. And while children are disproportionately affected by swine flu, the vast majority make a full recovery - therefore the experts do not advise that children (other than those in at-risk groups) should be vaccinated initially (*from NHS*)

### **Just how infectious is infectious?**

Here are some figures from a study I came across this week in the *Science* journal:

The researchers estimated that there was about a 27% chance of a person with swine flu infecting another person in their household. This placed swine flu among the more infectious influenza viruses.

They estimated that a child with swine flu is likely to pass on the infection to an average of 2.4 schoolmates. Around 20% of flu transmissions were estimated to occur in schools, 30 to 40% in households, and the remainder in the general community, workplaces and other settings. Based on these figures the researchers estimated that on average one person with swine flu will infect between 1.3 to 2.1 other people, and that the average time between a person being infected and them passing the virus on was between 2.6 and 3.2 days.

The researchers concluded that all of the vaccination strategies they modelled would successfully reduce the infection rate of the epidemic if they achieved 70% coverage of the population.

## Next webinar

My last in the series of webinars I have been doing for the BCI is on Wednesday afternoon. The details can be found if you email [tammy.lewis@thebci.org](mailto:tammy.lewis@thebci.org) who can give you the log ins you need.

This time I will be focussing on planning.

## Past Briefings

All previous briefings are available at our website:

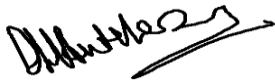
[www.glenabbot.co.uk](http://www.glenabbot.co.uk)

## Training and Consultancy

We provide specific pandemic training courses both publicly and bespoke to companies. If you are interested please contact me directly or email Geoff Howard at Continuity Shop ([gHoward@continuityshop.com](mailto:gHoward@continuityshop.com)).

We can also help organisation review or create plans so if you need any assistance please contact me via this email or Andrew Sinclair on [Andrew.sinclair@glenabbot.co.uk](mailto:Andrew.sinclair@glenabbot.co.uk). Our office number is 01738 580580.

Yours sincerely



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