

Idaho Statesman, Wednesday, Aug. 26, By Colleen Lamay

Flu shots will be late arriving

Who gets the vaccine first will depend on the supply

The Central District Health Department, which serves Ada, Boise, Elmore and Valley counties, said Tuesday that it expects its first shipments of H1N1 (swine flu) vaccine no sooner than mid-October.

Southwest District Health, which serves Canyon, Adams, Gem, Owyhee, Payette and Washington counties, said its vaccines could arrive as late as December.

"We still have many more questions than we have answers," said Laurie Boston, spokeswoman for Southwest District Health.

The H1N1 - also known as swine flu - shots are expected to be administered free to the public, perhaps with a small administrative fee, Boston said.

U.S. Health and Human Services Secretary Kathleen Sebelius said this week that the U.S. could see 30,000 to 90,000 deaths, mostly among young children and young adults, and perhaps as many as 300,000 people sick enough to require intensive care at hospitals, The Associated Press reported.

In Idaho, plans to get people vaccinated are still developing. This is what the health departments expect will happen:

- No one knows yet whether the vaccines will require one or two doses, so departments are planning for two.

Who gets the shots first depends on how many vaccines are available. If the vaccines are in short supply, pregnant women, people who care for infants, and medical personnel who deal directly with patients will be offered the shots first.

- The health departments will find places where large numbers of people can get vaccinations in a short time. Those locations will be announced in advance.

- The departments are working with school districts to develop mass vaccination clinics for students at their schools.