

DLA's largest distribution facility begins annual flu season support to military

By Emily Blubaugh, DLA Distribution Public Affairs

Once again, DLA Distribution Susquehanna, Pa., is gearing up to prepare military facilities with annual influenza vaccine stores.

The year's first shipments of the annual flu vaccine departed DLA Distribution Susquehanna, Pa., in early August for issue to military facilities, which in turn will administer the supplies to active duty, dependents, Department of Defense employees and retired military.

The 2009 Flu Season brought with it much concern over H1N1, a subtype of the familiar Influenza A virus. The H1N1 virus was the most common cause of human flu in 2009, but has since moved

into the post-pandemic phase. This year, DLA Distribution Susquehanna, Pa., will be distributing a new version of the influenza vaccine, which combines the H1N1 viral strain with more common flu strains, eliminating the need for a separate H1N1 vaccine. "Every year immunologists determine which strains will be the hardest hitting for the upcoming season. As a result, the DLA Distribution Susquehanna, Pa., seasonal influenza vaccine will contain the H1N1 component," said Michael Minto, DLA Distribution Medical and Chemical Biology program manager.

The primary shipper of influenza vaccine for the services, DLA Distribution Susquehanna, Pa., has issued over 10 million doses

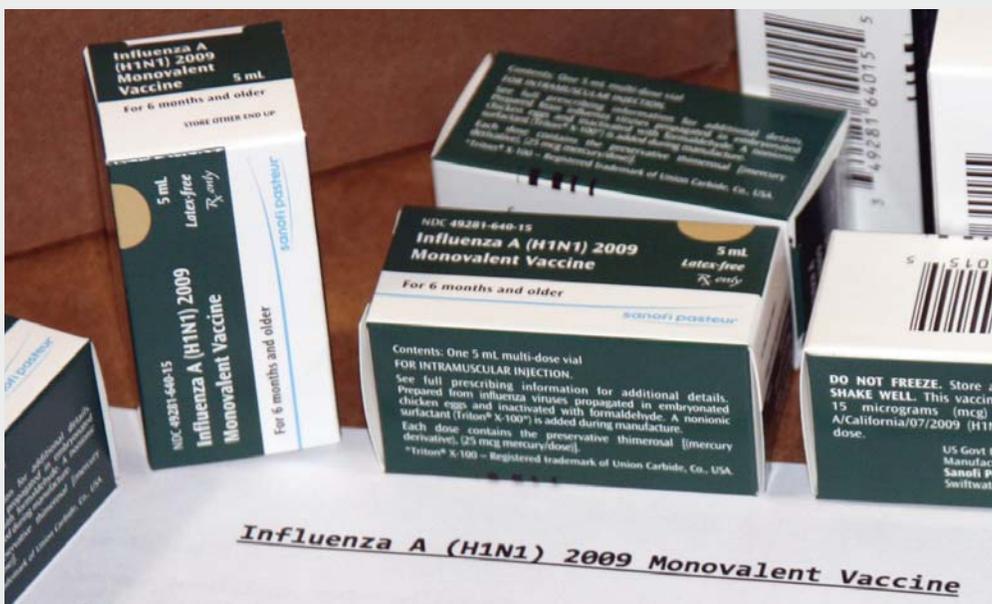
in the past five years, with nearly 5 million issued last year alone. The projected estimate for this year's distribution is nearly 3 million doses.

Although flu season had not officially begun, DLA Distribution Susquehanna, Pa., initiated the planning process for the upcoming season in June with the ordering of supplies, such as specialized packaging to ensure vaccines are maintained within the mandated temperature range. Additionally, cold chain test shipments were performed, as well as cold chain training. Lastly, refrigerator and freezer temperatures were verified and supplies conditioned according to protocols, remaining in accordance with Department of Defense-approved cold chain management protocols.

"Maintaining the vaccine's temperature is key to the distribution process. Use of specialized packaging and digital temperature monitoring devices ensure there is no compromise in quality during transport of the vaccines to our troops," said Minto.

DLA Distribution Susquehanna, Pa., is the only United States Pharmacopeia-compliant cold storage facility within DLA Distribution.

The organization also stores and distributes anti-viral pharmaceuticals and ancillary kits throughout the year.



The H1N1 virus was the most common cause of human flu in 2009, but has since moved into the post-pandemic phase. This year, DLA Distribution Susquehanna, Pa., will be distributing a new version of the influenza vaccine, which combines the H1N1 viral strain with more common flu strains, eliminating the need for a separate H1N1 vaccine.