Swine Flu Vaccination

A coalition of key stakeholders and staffside organisations have today issued a joint statement of support for the start of the swine flu vaccination programme. NHS Hospitals will begin vaccinating frontline healthcare workers and their patients who fall into at risk categories against swine flu from today. Around two million frontline health and social care workers will be offered the vaccine.

The following organisations have unanimously supported the programme:

British Medical Association (BMA)
Royal College of General Practitioners (RCGP)
Royal College of Midwives (RCM)
Royal College of Nursing (RCN)
Royal College of Obstetricians and Gynaecologists (RCOG)
Royal College of Psychiatrists
Royal Pharmaceutical Society of Great Britain
UNISON
NHS Employers
Department of Health

"The NHS depends on the people treating and caring for patients, day in day out – they are our most important asset and we are committed to protecting them and their families during the current swine flu pandemic.

"We fully support the swine flu vaccination programme - it will reduce the risk to staff, protect patients and help sustain services during the pandemic. By the nature of their work, many NHS staff come into close contact with patients and the public and have a higher risk of exposure to the virus.

"The vaccine has been thoroughly tested. All NHS organisations will be working hard to ensure that eligible staff are given access to the vaccination to protect themselves, their families and their patients from swine flu.

"We encourage staff to protect themselves with the swine flu vaccine, in addition to the seasonal 'flu immunisation. It is your best defence against 'flu this winter.' We also support your right not to be vaccinated, and recognise that the decision to be vaccinated is a personal matter."