



Charlie Crist  
Governor

Ana M. Viamonte Ros, M.D., M.P.H.  
State Surgeon General

Lillian Rivera, RN, MSN, PhD  
Administrator

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Dear Health Care Providers and Pharmacists:

The Florida Public Antiviral Stockpile Program has been established to ensure that all Florida residents and visitors who have been prescribed antiviral medications for influenza-like-illness have access to these medications regardless of their ability to pay.

Miami-Dade County Health Department seeks the support of health care providers and community pharmacies to ensure that all residents and visitors who are prescribed antivirals do not encounter financial barriers.

Physicians may assist by informing their patients who may have difficulty paying for a prescription that the medication can be obtained free of charge at a participating pharmacy.

All community pharmacies are invited to participate in the Florida Public Antiviral Stockpile Program. Selection will be based on geographic location, population demographics, and the distribution and severity of disease.

If the H1N1 influenza pandemic worsens over the next months prior to the widespread availability of the H1N1 vaccine, there may be a period of time when there will be a high demand for antiviral medications (such as Tamiflu® and Relenza®). To this end, Florida has created a stockpile of antiviral medications from two sources: the Florida allotment of the federal Strategic National Stockpile (SNS) and from purchases made by the Florida Department of Health.

Antiviral medications will be released from the stockpile and used within Florida to increase access for persons with no ability to pay. Pharmacies may participate in this program through a memorandum of understanding.

Physicians and pharmacies will be key to the success of this program to ensure antivirals are available regardless of an individual's ability to pay. I invite you to participate in this network for the benefit of public health in our community.

You may review the attached information and contact Myra Markowski, Miami-Dade County Health Department at 305-219-6338 for additional information or to participate in the Florida Public Antiviral Stockpile Program.

Sincerely

*Lillian Rivera*

Lillian Rivera, RN, MSN, PhD  
Administrator, Miami-Dade County Health Department



Miami-Dade County Health Department  
8175 NW 12 Street, #300, Miami, Florida 33126  
Tel: (305) 324-2400 Fax: (786) 336-1297  
Website: [www.dadehealth.org](http://www.dadehealth.org)





## Florida Public Antiviral Stockpile Program

Florida has created a stockpile of antiviral medications from two sources: the Florida allotment of the federal Strategic National Stockpile (SNS) and from purchases made by the Florida Department of Health. Antiviral medications will be released from the stockpile and used within Florida to increase access for persons with no ability to pay.

- The Florida Department of Health, through the Bureau of Statewide Pharmaceutical Services (BSPS), is developing a community pharmacy network as one of the primary mechanisms for distribution of the state's Public Antiviral Stockpile.
- The BSPS seeks partnerships via Memorandum of Understanding agreements with select retail pharmacy providers, to fill prescriptions for persons who do not have the ability to pay.
- All community pharmacies are welcomed and encouraged to participate in the Florida Antiviral Pharmacy Network. Selection for participation will be based on geographic location, population demographics, and the distribution and severity of disease.
- Participating community pharmacies will continue to fill antiviral prescriptions through their normal business processes. In the event that an individual makes a verbal declaration of an inability to pay, the pharmacy will fill the prescription and document the transaction in the established tracking format. No other proof of economic hardship will be solicited.
- Participating pharmacies will receive the antiviral medications from the state's antiviral stockpile at no charge.
- These antiviral medications will be dispensed at no charge to patients who present valid prescriptions.
- A dispensing fee, maximum of \$10 per prescription, may be charged by the dispensing pharmacy to the patient. However, the Pharmacy must be willing to waive this fee if the patient is not able to pay this fee.
- The main criteria for selection of pharmacies will be geographic location and population demographics. Participating pharmacies must be willing to have state stockpile antiviral medications only in the specific store locations covered in the agreement.
- State stockpile antiviral medications are not permitted to leave the State of Florida under any circumstances. All distribution and delivery routes must remain within the State of Florida.
- Maintain the state stockpile inventory of antivirals physically separate from the community pharmacy's existing antiviral inventory.
- State stockpile of antivirals must be maintained in a safe and secure location during distribution, storage, and dispensing.
- Participating pharmacies will need to submit regular reports about quantities of state stockpile antiviral medication dispensed and on-hand. The Florida Department of Health Bureau of Statewide Pharmaceutical Services will work with community pharmacy partners individually to streamline reporting.
- All information provided by the Bureau of Pharmaceutical Services (BSPS), the County Health Department and the participating pharmacies, regarding state stock antiviral medications is strictly confidential under provisions of state law. This includes, but is not limited to, any information about state stockpile antiviral medication supply, storage, distribution, and dispensing. All information provided by participating community pharmacies (i.e. levels of state stock dispensed and on-hand, distribution channels, etc.) will remain strictly confidential. This information will only be shared with key emergency response professionals on an as needed basis only.

### Public Antiviral Stockpile Program

**Program Goal:** The goal of the Florida Public Antiviral Stockpile Program is to ensure that all Florida residents and visitors, who have been prescribed antiviral medications for influenza-like illness, have access to these medications regardless of their ability to pay.

**Clinical Use of Antivirals:** The public antiviral stockpile is to be used for treatment and prevention of influenza in accordance with current Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommendations which can be found at <http://www.cdc.gov/h1n1flu/recommendations.htm>.

**General Antiviral Availability:** In general, it is anticipated there will be sufficient supplies of antivirals available in the retail pharmacy sector to meet population needs. However, two circumstances may occur to limit access for individuals who have been prescribed antivirals—an individual's inability to pay for prescribed antivirals or a localized temporary shortage of antivirals at pharmacies. The Public Antiviral Stockpile Program has been developed to address these circumstances.

#### Program Dispensing Options:

- Retail Pharmacies:
  - Designated retail pharmacies, through written agreement with the Department of Health, will be able to provide Public Antiviral Stockpile Program antivirals to persons who do not have the ability to pay. Determination of inability to pay is through a pharmacy's routine business practice of insurance pharmaceutical coverage assessment and self declaration by the individual of inability to pay.
  - Retail pharmacies can be provided antivirals in the event of verified localized shortages. The Department of Health has established processes to provide transfer of stockpile antivirals to pharmacies where shortages have been verified.
  - Contact the Department of Health, Bureau of Statewide Pharmaceutical Services, Public Health Preparedness Branch, Monday through Friday between the hours of 8:00 am and 5:00 pm est. at (850) 922-9036 for additional information.
- Hospital Pharmacies are allowed to dispense full courses of stockpile antivirals under F.S. 465.019(2)(b) and with the existing Federal Public Health Emergency Declaration. Stockpile antivirals can be provided to hospital pharmacies to meet the needs of patients seen in emergency departments who do not have the ability to pay. Contact your local county health department for participation requirements.
- Private providers may dispense public stockpile antivirals to persons without the ability to pay under 64F-12.011(1)(h) and (i) FAC and with the Federal Public Health Emergency Declaration. Contact your local county health department for participation requirements.
- County health departments are able to provide stockpile antivirals to their clients who do not have the ability to pay.

**Additional Information:** Contact your local county health department. Find yours here: [www.floridashealth.com](http://www.floridashealth.com)