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**The federal government is expected to approve the release of the H1N1 swine flu vaccine this week, CBC News has learned.**

In the last few days, up to five million doses of the vaccine have been shipped to local health authorities across the country, so Canadians can be quickly immunized once approval was granted.

For weeks now, many public health units have been planning where they will open pandemic flu clinics.

If the vaccine is approved this week, federal officials say they hope they will be ready to dispense the vaccine a couple of days later, the CBC's Ioanna Roumeliotis reported. Officials also hope that doses of non-adjuvanted vaccine will also be made available but it's unclear if it will be part of the early batches, she said.

Canada has also purchased H1N1 vaccine that lacks a chemical booster called an adjuvant for use in pregnant women, because there is limited data on the safety of the adjuvant in pregnant women, Canada's chief public health officer, Dr. David Butler-Jones, said.

Health Minister Leona Aglukkaq and senior members of the Public Health Agency of Canada will hold a news conference on Monday at 11:30 a.m. ET to provide an update on the H1N1 flu virus, according to an agency news release.

The federal government has said Canadians won't have access to the vaccine until the first week of November.

The plan has been to give local health authorities until early November to organize the roll-out of the pandemic vaccine. But privately, it has been co-ordinating an earlier roll-out for weeks, Roumeliotis said.

As of Thursday, 80 deaths in Canada have been linked to the virus, according to the Public Health Agency of Canada.

Canada is reporting increases in influenza-like illness rates for the third straight week with some provinces now beyond levels normally seen at this time of year, the World Health Organization said in its weekly update on Friday.

British Columbia and the Northwest Territories are seeing higher numbers of flu compared with the rest of the country.

B.C. has been the hardest hit with what experts are now calling the second wave of swine flu. The concern is that similar outbreaks will happen in other parts of the country before a vaccine is available.

Dr. Michael Gardam of the Ontario Agency for Health Protection and Promotion said the timing for an H1N1 vaccine roll-out is right now.

"This is really great timing for us to get the vaccine because we are seeing a fair amount of flu activity in British Columbia," he said.

"But for the rest of the country, things are just starting to pick up now. So fortunately if we can get the vaccine out very quickly, we should be able to have a pretty big impact on people getting sick with the flu this fall."

Timing is crucial since outbreaks such as the one in B.C. can last up to 12 weeks so the goal is to get the vaccine to as many people as possible before the worst is over, Roumeliotis said.

Once a person is vaccinated, it can take up for two weeks for that person to develop antibodies to the virus.