



NEW YORK CITY DEPARTMENT OF
HEALTH AND MENTAL HYGIENE
Thomas Farley, MD, MPH
Commissioner

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Dear Colleague:

This is an update on the availability and distribution of seasonal influenza vaccine through the Vaccines for Children (VFC) Program.

To date, only about two-thirds of VFC providers in New York City have ordered influenza vaccine. **We urge those VFC providers who have not yet ordered vaccine to do so.** A sufficient supply of seasonal influenza vaccine is expected to be available to allow you to immunize all of your patients.

You should begin your vaccination efforts as soon as possible. It is not too early. Vaccine given now will offer patients protection throughout the entire influenza season. Recommendations for the 2012-2013 influenza season were published by the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices on August 17, 2012 (go to <http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/mm6132a3.htm>).

All children 6 months and older are recommended to receive influenza vaccine annually. For optimal protection against influenza disease, some children aged 6 months through 8 years may require a second dose of vaccine administered at least 4 weeks after the first dose. The algorithm included in this notice provides additional guidance (Figure). Children requiring a second dose include:

- 1) All children who have not received at least 2 doses of seasonal influenza vaccine in the past;
- 2) Children who received 2 prior doses of influenza vaccine but did not receive at least one dose of seasonal influenza vaccine in either the 2010-11 or 2011-12 season, or a dose of monovalent 2009 (H1N1) vaccine.

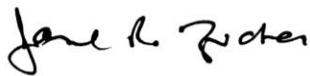
Regular updates on influenza activity are posted on the Health Department's Health Alert Network (HAN), and at www.nyc.gov/flu under the "Surveillance" tab. As a reminder, the New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DOHMH) requests providers to report to 347-396-2600 any:

- Pediatric influenza-associated deaths in children 17 years of age and younger if they meet either of these criteria: 1) clinically compatible illness in which there is a positive influenza test; or 2) death from an unknown febrile respiratory illness.
- Nosocomial cases of lab-confirmed influenza or clusters of 2 or more cases of influenza-like illness in Article 28 facilities. These cases should also be reported to the New York State Department of Health electronically through the Health Commerce System (HCS) Nosocomial Outbreak Reporting Application at https://commerce.health.state.ny.us/hcsportal/hcs_home.portal?_nfpb=true&_pageLabel=hcs_home_page, or complete a Healthcare Facility Infection Control (Nosocomial) Report available at www.nyhealth.gov/forms/doh-4018.pdf and fax to 518-402-5165.

Finally, please note that DOHMH can only provide practitioners with influenza vaccine as part of the VFC program. To obtain vaccine for adults and non-VFC eligible patients, providers should contact vaccine manufacturers or distributors; for more information, visit <http://www.nyc.gov/html/doh/downloads/pdf/imm/flu-imm-order-info.pdf>.

We encourage you to make every effort to vaccinate *all* your eligible patients this year. For further information about influenza, please visit www.nyc.gov/flu. Thank you for helping protect New York City residents from influenza.

Sincerely,



Jane R. Zucker, M.D., M.Sc.

Figure: 2012-2013 Influenza vaccine algorithm for children 6 months through 8 years of age

