



**NEW YORK CITY DEPARTMENT OF
HEALTH AND MENTAL HYGIENE**

Oxiris Barbot, MD
Acting Commissioner

January 2, 2019

Jane R. Zucker, MD, MSc
Assistant Commissioner
Bureau of Immunization

42-09 28th Street, CN21
Queens, NY 11101-4132

Dear Colleague:

This is an update on influenza activity and the availability and distribution of seasonal flu vaccine. Currently, influenza activity is elevated in the United States, as well as in New York City (NYC), and is expected to continue to increase in the coming weeks. Specimens in NYC continue to test positive for influenza.

As of December 14, 2018, about 167 million doses of flu vaccine have been distributed nationally. In NYC, we have been allocated 97% of the flu vaccine we pre-booked for the Vaccines for Children (VFC) program, and most of this vaccine has been shipped to facilities. Flu vaccine orders continue to be filled at this time, though some facilities may receive partial shipments until their order has been completely shipped. All products are in good supply. For any help you might need with your VFC flu order, please call (347) 396-2489. **If you need additional VFC vaccine, don't stop vaccination efforts; update your flu vaccine order so we can ship more vaccine.**

Flu vaccine is still available for purchase for providers and medical facilities who need vaccine for their non-VFC eligible or adult populations. More information about what products are available can be found at <https://www.izsubmitpartners.org/ivats/>.

Starting January 1, 2019, all children six months through 59 months of age enrolled in New York City Article 47 & 43 regulated pre-kindergarten programs (Child Care, Head Start, Nursery or Pre-K) may be excluded from these programs if they have not had at least one dose of flu vaccine this season. Consequently, you may see an increase in requests for flu vaccine for young children in January.

To date, influenza A(H1N1)pdm09 viruses have predominated nationally. Although it is too soon to make an assessment about this season's severity, the H1N1 virus has been associated with severe illness among young children and pregnant women. The 2017-18 season saw influenza A(H3N2) as the predominant strain nationally, and it too was associated with a very high burden of illness, hospitalizations and almost 80,000 deaths.

The New York State (NYS) Department of Health Commissioner has declared influenza to be prevalent in NYS. In accordance with the NYS Sanitary Code, all personnel at healthcare and residential facilities regulated pursuant to Article 28, 36, or 40 of the Public Health Law who are not vaccinated against influenza are now required to wear a surgical or procedure mask while in areas where patients or residents may be present.

For questions on flu vaccine, other than those pertaining to your VFC order, please call (347) 396-2400 or email nycimmunize@health.nyc.gov. We thank you for your continuing efforts at protecting NYC residents from influenza.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Jane R. Zucker'.

Jane R. Zucker, MD, MSc