



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

August 8, 2013

Dear Colleague:

The New York City Department of Health and Mental Hygiene Bureau of Immunization (BOI) would like to inform you that the initial distribution of seasonal influenza vaccine for the 2013-14 season has begun. The Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) continues to recommend that all people aged 6 months and older receive an annual influenza vaccine. Please be sure to vaccinate all of your patients and staff, especially those at high risk for severe disease and complications from influenza, including children less than 5 years of age, people with long-term health conditions, pregnant women, and people age 50 and older. Please begin vaccinating as soon as you receive vaccine; it is not too early to start vaccinating your patients.

### **The Need to Improve Vaccination Rates**

Influenza disease can lead to severe morbidity and mortality. In 2012-13, 156 pediatric deaths due to influenza were reported nationally, including four in New York City. Vaccination is the best method of preventing influenza disease. However, in 2012-13, only 64.5% of children aged 6 through 59 months and 46.2% of children aged 5 through 8 years received at least one dose of influenza vaccine (data from Citywide Immunization Registry [CIR]). In addition, only 30.5% of children aged 9 through 18 years were vaccinated. These rates remain far below the Healthy People 2020 goal of 80% coverage in these age groups. Similarly, only 67% of persons 65 years of age and older received an influenza vaccine in 2011-2012, compared to the Healthy People 2020 goal of 90% (2011 Community Health Survey). Please be sure to use every opportunity to vaccinate your patients this season.

### **Vaccine Ordering through the Vaccines for Children Program**

BOI is now accepting Vaccines for Children (VFC) influenza vaccine orders; all VFC orders must be placed electronically, using the CIR at [www.nyc.gov/health/cir](http://www.nyc.gov/health/cir). After logging into CIR, click on the VFC icon and select the Order Influenza Vaccine tab. Please submit an order for **all** of the influenza vaccine you will need for the **entire 2013-14 season**.

Beginning this season, new quadrivalent vaccines will be available. We do not know the proportion of our allocated influenza vaccine that will be quadrivalent or trivalent and, therefore, cannot tell providers which products they will receive in advance. We anticipate that most providers will likely receive a mix of both products.

We are beginning to process initial orders and ship vaccine. You will be able to track your influenza vaccine shipments and edit your influenza vaccine order in the Online Registry. If you need assistance with submitting your order or have questions, please e-mail [nycimmunize@health.nyc.gov](mailto:nycimmunize@health.nyc.gov) or call the VFC program at 347-396-2489. We expect to be able to supply you with enough influenza vaccine to immunize all of your patients. Vaccination should not end when your practice runs out of vaccine; additional vaccine can be ordered through the VFC program, if needed.

### **Vaccine Ordering For Non-VFC Eligible Children and Adults**

For non-VFC eligible children and adults, providers can obtain influenza vaccine by contacting influenza vaccine manufacturers or distributors. For a list of vaccine manufacturers and distributors, please visit [www.nyc.gov/html/doh/downloads/pdf/imm/flu-imm-order-info.pdf](http://www.nyc.gov/html/doh/downloads/pdf/imm/flu-imm-order-info.pdf). Although influenza vaccine is still available for purchase, you will need to confirm directly with the vaccine manufacturer or distributor about which vaccine products they have. Please note that New York State Public Health Law §2112, effective July 1, 2008, prohibits the administration of vaccines containing more than trace amounts of thimerosal to children younger than 3 years of age and to women who know they are pregnant (though pregnancy testing is not required prior to vaccination). Be sure to order enough of the preservative-free, single-dose preparations of influenza vaccine to immunize all of these patients in your practice.

### **Vaccinating Children 6 Months through 8 Years of Age**

Recommendations for two doses of influenza vaccine in children 6 months through 8 years remains unchanged this season. Children in this age group who require a second dose of influenza vaccine, administered at least 4 weeks after the first dose, include:

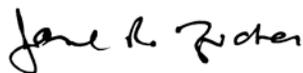
1. All children who have not received at least two doses of seasonal influenza vaccine in the past, or
2. Children who have received 2 prior doses of influenza vaccine, but did not receive at least one dose of seasonal influenza vaccine since 2010 or at least one dose of monovalent 2009 (H1N1) vaccine.

### **Reporting of Influenza Vaccines**

Providers must report all doses administered to children less than 19 years of age to the CIR. Remember to report doses given in weekend or special flu clinics. As of July 12, 2013, vaccines administered to adults age 19 years and older may be reported to the CIR with **verbal** consent; **written consent is longer required**. We strongly encourage adult providers to obtain verbal consent from adult patients, document it in the patient's record and report all administered doses. If you are not already registered with the CIR, we encourage you to do so. For more information, please visit [www.nyc.gov/health/cir](http://www.nyc.gov/health/cir). Many pharmacies in New York City report influenza vaccines given to adults to the CIR. By obtaining access to CIR, you will be able to look up your individual patients to see if they have gotten a flu vaccine outside of your practice.

We encourage you to begin vaccinating as soon as possible. For current information about influenza, please visit [www.nyc.gov/flu](http://www.nyc.gov/flu). We will send out updates throughout the season to keep you informed. Thank you for helping protect New York City residents from influenza.

Sincerely,



Jane R. Zucker, M.D., M.Sc.  
Assistant Commissioner  
Bureau of Immunization