



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

Mary T. Bassett, MD, MPH  
Commissioner

August 10, 2017

Dear Colleague:

The New York City (NYC) Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DOHMH) Bureau of Immunization (BOI) would like to inform you that the initial distribution of seasonal flu vaccine for the 2017-18 season has begun. The Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) continues to recommend that all people 6 months of age and older receive an annual flu 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 females, and people aged 65 and older. Begin vaccinating as soon as you receive vaccine; it is not too early to start vaccinating your patients now.

**Influenza Updates for the 2017-2018 Season**

This year's flu vaccine contains the following virus strains: an A/Michigan/45/2015 (H1N1) pdm-09-like virus (which is a new strain for the vaccine this year), an A/Hong Kong/4801/2014 (H3N2)-like virus, and a B/Brisbane/60/2008-like virus (B/Victoria lineage). Quadrivalent vaccines will contain the same viruses plus an additional influenza B virus, B/Phuket/3073/2013-like (B/Yamagata lineage) virus.

For the 2017-18 influenza season, ACIP has again recommended against use of live attenuated influenza vaccine (LAIV) (FluMist Quadrivalent®, AstraZeneca) because of the vaccine's reduced efficacy in the 2015-16 flu season. Providers should use other age-appropriate vaccine for their patients.

ACIP also voted to revise the influenza recommendation for pregnant women, to clarify that they may receive any recommended, licensed, and age-appropriate influenza vaccine, administered at any time during pregnancy, except for LAIV.

**Vaccine Ordering through the Vaccines for Children (VFC) Program**

BOI is now accepting VFC flu vaccine orders; all VFC orders must be placed electronically, using the Citywide Immunization Registry (CIR), at [www.nyc.gov/health/cir](http://www.nyc.gov/health/cir). After logging into the CIR, click on the Vaccine Inventory Management (VIM) icon and select the Order Influenza Vaccine tab. Please submit an order for **all** of the flu vaccine you will need for the **entire 2017-18 season**. Please note that only quadrivalent vaccines will be available through the VFC program.

This season, please be aware that there are two flu vaccines licensed for use in children 6-35 months of age: 0.25 mL single-dose pre-filled syringes of Fluzone® (Sanofi Pasteur) and 0.5 mL single-dose pre-filled syringes of Flulaval® (GSK). You may receive either product depending on availability and they are to be considered equivalent doses when calculating how many doses a child under 9 years of age will need.

In NYC, pediatric flu vaccine coverage declined in the 2016-17 season and remains well below the Healthy People 2020 goal of 70%. In 2016-17, only 61% of children aged 6 through 59 months and 49% of children aged 5 through 8 years received at least one dose of influenza vaccine (data from the CIR), both of which represent declines from the 2015-16 season. In addition, only 37% of children aged 9 through 18 years were vaccinated and, while this translates to a slight increase from 2015-16, is still far below the Healthy People goal. Similarly, only 43% of persons 18 years of age and older received an influenza vaccine in 2016 (2016 Community Health Survey), compared to the Healthy People 2020 goal of 70%.

A review of the amount of influenza vaccine ordered during previous seasons indicates that many sites are not ordering enough influenza vaccine to fully vaccinate their VFC-eligible populations. We have amended the ordering tool to help ensure that the VFC-eligible population is properly immunized against influenza. The recommended order quantity column is an estimate of the **minimum** number of vaccine doses your site needs for the 2017-2018 influenza season. Please use these recommendations as a guide when ordering your influenza vaccine. It is not required that you order the recommended amount. Influenza vaccine is not included in your practice's doses administered report (DAR) calculation and you will not be penalized for any unused vaccine. You can adjust your order during the season as needed.

You will be able to track your flu vaccine shipments and edit your flu vaccine order in the Online Registry. If you need assistance with submitting your order or have questions, 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 flu vaccine to immunize all of your VFC-eligible patients. Vaccination should not end if your practice runs out of vaccine; if needed, you can order additional vaccine.

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

For non-VFC eligible children and adults, providers can obtain flu vaccine by contacting vaccine manufacturers or distributors. For a list of vaccine manufacturers and distributors, visit <http://www1.nyc.gov/assets/doh/downloads/pdf/imm/flu-vac-ordering>, which will soon be updated to reflect vaccines available this coming season. You will need to confirm product availability directly with vaccine manufacturers and distributors. 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 (pregnancy testing is not required prior to vaccination). Be sure to order enough of the preservative-free, single-dose preparations of vaccine to immunize all of these patients in your practice.

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

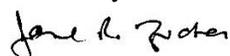
In the 2017-18 season, children aged 6 months through 8 years of age who have not received two doses of flu vaccine prior to July 1, 2017, will require 2 doses of flu vaccine, administered at least 4 weeks apart. The two previous doses do not need to have been given during the same season or consecutive seasons. If a child under 9 years of age has previously received two doses of flu vaccine, that child will need only one dose this season.

### **Reporting of Flu Vaccines Administered**

Providers must report all doses administered to children less than 19 years of age to the CIR. Remember to report doses given in weekend and special influenza clinics. Please note that vaccines administered to adults age 19 years and older may be reported to the CIR with either *verbal or written* consent. We strongly encourage providers to obtain consent from adult patients and report all administered doses. We recommend that you include obtaining consent to report immunizations as part of the general consent process in your facility. 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). Effective October 2014, pharmacists and registered nurses in NYC must report all vaccines, including flu vaccine, given to adults to the CIR, with the patient's consent. By obtaining access to the CIR, you will be able to look up your adult patients to see if they have gotten a flu vaccine outside of your practice. Flu vaccines given outside your practice that are documented in the patient's medical record are valid and count toward quality improvement initiatives and incentives.

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. We thank you for helping to protect NYC residents from influenza.

Sincerely,



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