



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

Mary T. Bassett, MD, MPH
Commissioner

August 16, 2016

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 2016-17 season has begun. The Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) continues to recommend that all people aged 6 months 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 age 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 2016-2017 season

This year's flu vaccine contains the following virus strains: A/California/7/2009 (H1N1)pdm-09-like virus, A/Hong Kong/4801/2014 (H3N2)-like virus, 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 virus (B/Yamagata lineage).

For the 2016-17 influenza season, ACIP recommended against use of live attenuated influenza vaccine (LAIV) (FluMist Quadrivalent®, AstraZeneca). Providers should use injectable, inactivated influenza vaccine (IIV), either trivalent or quadrivalent, for all their patients. The ACIP reviewed data from the U.S. Influenza Vaccine Effectiveness (VE) Network demonstrating that IIV is more effective than LAIV against influenza A/H1N1. For more information, please visit: <http://www.cdc.gov/media/releases/2016/s0622-laiv-flu.html>.

ACIP is also currently updating its guidance for vaccination of patients with a history of egg-allergy. We will update you with further guidance when it is available.

Vaccine Ordering through the Vaccines for Children Program

BOI is now accepting Vaccines for Children (VFC) flu vaccine orders; all VFC orders must be placed electronically, using the Citywide Immunization Registry (CIR), at www.nyc.gov/health/cir. After logging into the CIR, click on the VFC icon and select the Order Influenza Vaccine tab. Please submit an order for **all** of the flu vaccine you will need for the **entire 2016-17 season**. Please note that only quadrivalent vaccines will be available through the VFC program.

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. Pediatric influenza vaccine coverage in NYC remains far below the Healthy People 2020 goal of 70%. 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 2016-2017 influenza season. Please use these recommendations as a guide when pre-booking your influenza vaccine. It is not required that you order the recommended amount. Influenza vaccine is not included in your practice's 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, please e-mail 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 patients. Vaccination should not end if your practice runs out of vaccine; if needed, you can order additional vaccine. A sufficient quantity of influenza vaccine is expected to be available for VFC-eligible children.

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.pdf>, which will soon be updated to reflect vaccines available this coming season. You will need to confirm directly with the vaccine manufacturer or distributor 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 (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.

If your facility pre-booked FluMist, you should contact the vaccine distributor you placed the vaccine order with to cancel the order, if you haven't already done so. All orders can be cancelled without penalty. Providers who need to book additional vaccine should do so immediately. LAIV accounts for approximately 8% of the U.S. flu vaccine market and the other vaccine manufacturers are expected to provide additional vaccine to fill this gap. Some vaccine manufacturers are accepting flu vaccine orders, while others have a wait-list. Please contact the vaccine manufacturers or your distributor directly. Information on vaccine availability through manufacturers and distributors will be available at the Influenza Vaccine Availability Tracking System (IVATS) (<http://www.izsummitpartners.org/ivats>).

Vaccinating Children 6 Months through 8 Years of Age

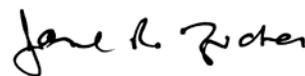
In the 2016-17 season, children aged 6 months through 8 years of age who have not received two doses of flu vaccine prior to July 1, 2016, will require 2 doses of flu vaccine, administered at least 4 weeks apart. The two previous doses do not need to have been given during the same season or consecutive 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. 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. We will send out updates throughout the season to keep you informed. Thank you for helping protect NYC residents from influenza.

Sincerely,



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