



**NEW YORK CITY DEPARTMENT OF
HEALTH AND MENTAL HYGIENE**
Mary T. Bassett, MD, MPH
Commissioner

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

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

July 17, 2015

Dear Colleague:

The Bureau of Immunization has recently changed the decision support in the Citywide Immunization Registry (CIR) to recommend hepatitis A vaccine for all children 1-18 years of age who do not have 2 valid doses recorded in the CIR. This change was undertaken to address changes in hepatitis A epidemiology seen at the national level, which are described below.

At the October 2014 Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices meeting, data were presented showing that hepatitis A incidence rates increased in 2012 and 2013. Adults now represent 85% of all reported cases, and only 13% of cases have an identifiable risk factor. Furthermore, hospitalization rates have increased, as has the mean age of hospitalized patients. In addition, national serologic surveys demonstrate that immunity among US adults has decreased. Likewise, in New York City (NYC) 85% of hepatitis A cases were among adults from 2012-14. Of adult cases in 2012-14, only 61% had an identifiable risk factor, most commonly international travel.

An assessment of hepatitis A vaccine coverage in NYC, based on CIR data, indicates that protection among children is high. An estimated 83% of children 24-59 months of age have received 2 valid doses of hepatitis A vaccine. Likewise, 84% and 71% of children 5-8 and 9-18 years of age, respectively, have completed the 2-dose hepatitis A vaccine series. In all age groups, a larger proportion of children have received at least 1 dose of hepatitis A vaccine than have completed the 2-dose series.

We have an opportunity to provide lifetime protection for NYC children from hepatitis A infection by ensuring they complete the 2-dose vaccine series, with a minimal interval of 6 months between doses. The pediatric/adolescent formulation is 0.5 mL given intramuscularly. Hepatitis A vaccine is available through the Vaccines for Children (VFC) program, and is covered by commercial insurance.

Thank you in advance for helping to protect New Yorkers from vaccine-preventable diseases.

Sincerely,

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

Jane R. Zucker, MD, MSc