



NEW YORK CITY DEPARTMENT OF
HEALTH AND MENTAL HYGIENE

Thomas Farley, MD, MPH
Commissioner

January 17, 2012

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

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

Dear Colleague:

The New York City (NYC) Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DOHMH) Bureau of Immunization (BOI) strongly encourages you to continue vaccinating your patients with seasonal influenza vaccine this season. To date, we have been allocated all of our influenza vaccine order by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. For the pediatric program, over 750,000 doses, or just over three-quarters of our allocation, have been shipped to NYC providers. There is an ample supply of vaccine for you to order more vaccine and immunize all your patients.

Based on data available from the Citywide Immunization Registry (CIR), we estimate that approximately 43% of children aged 6 through 59 months and 30% of children 5-8 years have been vaccinated with seasonal influenza vaccine so far this season. Influenza vaccination coverage in children 9-18 years is only 21%. While these numbers represent a slight increase in coverage from this time last season, there are still many NYC children who have yet to be vaccinated and are unprotected from influenza infection and its complications.

Influenza activity in NYC currently remains low, making it a good time to vaccinate your patients who have not yet been immunized. Historically, influenza activity peaks in the late winter months and continues to persist into the spring. In past years, influenza viruses have continued to circulate through the summer, and NYC has had outbreaks late in the spring. **Therefore, you should continue to offer patients seasonal influenza vaccine throughout the spring, until the vaccine expires.** In addition, all children aged 8 years or younger should receive two doses of influenza vaccine if they did not receive at least one dose of seasonal influenza vaccine in the 2010-2011 influenza season.

If you need more vaccine from the Vaccines for Children Program (VFC), we urge you to place an order. DOHMH also has additional influenza vaccine that may be used for your non-VFC eligible patients. This vaccine may be used for either pediatric or adult patients. You may order both types of vaccine through the CIR online at www.nyc.gov/health/cir. If you need assistance with CIR ordering or reporting, or to inquire about influenza vaccine, please e-mail us at nycimmunize@health.nyc.gov.

For further information about influenza, please visit www.nyc.gov/flu. We thank you for your efforts in this year's influenza vaccination campaign.

Sincerely,

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

Jane R. Zucker, MD, MSc
Assistant Commissioner