



NEW YORK CITY DEPARTMENT OF
HEALTH AND MENTAL HYGIENE
Oxiris Barbot, MD
Commissioner

April 18, 2019

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

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

Dear Colleague:

This is an update on influenza activity and the availability and distribution of seasonal flu vaccine. Influenza activity has decreased but remains elevated in most of the United States, as well as in New York City (NYC). Specimens in NYC continue to test positive for influenza, and there continues to be influenza outbreaks in long-term care facilities; there were nine in the week ending April 6, 2019. The majority of influenza viruses that have been characterized antigenically and genetically in the United States have been similar to the cell-grown reference viruses representing the 2018-19 Northern Hemisphere influenza vaccine viruses; specifically, 97% of the H3N1 influenza A viruses, 55% of the H3N2 influenza A viruses, 76% of the B/Victoria viruses, and 100% of the B/Yamagata viruses characterized at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) matched the respective strains in the vaccine.

In NYC, we have received all of our Vaccines for Children (VFC) program flu vaccine, and all products are in good supply. For any help you may need with your VFC flu vaccine order, please call (347) 396-2489. **If you need additional VFC vaccine, don't stop vaccination efforts; revise your flu vaccine order so we can ship your facility more vaccine.**

Influenza activity in New York State (NYS) remains widespread, though in recent weeks NYS has been reporting a decrease in the number of laboratory-confirmed influenza reports. Influenza-like illness visits still account for 2.5% of all outpatient weekly visits in NYC. Three influenza-associated pediatric deaths have been confirmed in NYC; nationwide, as of April 12, 2019, 86 influenza-associated pediatric deaths have been confirmed.

Despite decreasing influenza activity, influenza is still taking a serious toll. It is not too late to vaccinate. Review and work to increase flu coverage for your facility; continue to vaccinate all eligible patients with flu vaccine. If you need additional VFC vaccine, order via the Online Registry, at www.nyc.gov/health/cir. For a list of available products for purchase, visit <http://www.izsubmitpartners.org/ivats/>.

Since influenza activity remains widespread in NYS, all personnel at healthcare and residential facilities regulated pursuant to Article 28, 36, or 40 of the Public Health Law who are not vaccinated against influenza are still required to wear a surgical or procedure mask while in areas where patients or residents may be present.

For questions on flu vaccine, other than those pertaining to your VFC order, please call (347) 396-2400 or email nycimmunize@health.nyc.gov. We thank you for your continuing efforts at protecting NYC residents from influenza.

Sincerely,

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

Jane R. Zucker, MD, MSc