



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

Oxiris Barbot, MD
Acting Commissioner

February 4, 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. Currently, influenza activity is elevated in the United States, as well as in New York City (NYC), and the 2018-19 influenza season is well underway. Specimens in NYC continue to test positive for influenza. The majority of influenza viruses characterized antigenically and genetically in the United States are similar to the cell-grown reference viruses representing the 2018-19 Northern Hemisphere influenza vaccine viruses.

As of January 18, 2019, about 168 million doses of flu vaccine have been distributed nationally. 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.**

Flu vaccine is still available for purchase for providers and medical facilities needing vaccine for their non-VFC eligible or adult populations. More information about what products are available can be found at <https://www.izsubmitpartners.org/ivats/>.

As of January 28, 2019, flu vaccine coverage (with one dose) was 64% for children aged 6-59 months, 47% for children aged 5-8 years, and 35% for children 9-18 years of age. These numbers all represent increases from last year at this time but are still below the Healthy People 2020 goal of 70% for children aged 6 months through 17 years.

Starting January 1, 2019, all children six months through 59 months of age enrolled in New York City Article 47 & 43 regulated pre-kindergarten programs (Child Care, Head Start, Nursery or Pre-K) may be excluded from these programs if they have not had at least one dose of flu vaccine this season or a valid medical or religious exemption. Consequently, you may see an increase in requests for flu vaccine for young children attending daycare.

Influenza activity in New York State (NYS) remains widespread. Consequently, in accordance with the NYS Sanitary Code, 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