



NEW YORK CITY DEPARTMENT OF  
HEALTH AND MENTAL HYGIENE  
Thomas Farley, MD, MPH  
*Commissioner*

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

December 12, 2012

Dear Colleague:

This is an update on the availability and distribution of seasonal influenza vaccine through the Vaccines for Children (VFC) Program and on early coverage estimates for New York City (NYC).

Influenza vaccine continues to be in good supply. The Bureau of Immunization has distributed over 600,000 doses of influenza vaccine to pediatric providers since August 2012. However, as of November 26, 2012, less than one-third of children aged 6 through 59 months and less than one-quarter of children aged 5 through 8 years have received at least one dose of influenza vaccine, based on data from the Citywide Immunization Registry (CIR). Influenza vaccination coverage in children is currently lower than at this same time last year. However, influenza disease activity in NYC is currently increasing and, as recently announced by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), influenza activity throughout the United States is much higher than this time last year, and is the earliest start to the influenza season since the 2003-04 season.

The majority of influenza specimens tested at the CDC have been characterized as Influenza A H3N2 and Influenza B viruses, corresponding to the vaccine strains included in the 2012-2013 seasonal influenza vaccine. H3N2 viruses have historically been associated with more severe influenza seasons, so please ensure that your patients are protected.

Hurricane Sandy may have severely disrupted operations for many facilities and may have prevented patients from keeping their regularly scheduled appointments for flu vaccination. We encourage all providers to reach out to their patients who have not been vaccinated yet. Tools are available through the CIR, to easily identify which of your patients need vaccine. Also, please be sure to enter all administered doses of influenza vaccine into the CIR.

Providers who lost VFC vaccine due to Hurricane Sandy should contact the VFC program at 347-396-2405 to request replacement vaccines.

We encourage you to make every effort to vaccinate *all* your eligible patients this year. For further information about influenza, please visit [www.nyc.gov/flu](http://www.nyc.gov/flu). Thank you for helping protect New York City residents from influenza.

Sincerely,

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

Jane R. Zucker, M.D., M.Sc