



NEW YORK CITY DEPARTMENT OF
HEALTH AND MENTAL HYGIENE

Dave A. Chokshi, MD, MSc

Commissioner

February 10, 2022

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 in recent weeks but is still elevated nationally. The percent of specimens testing positive for influenza remains stable, indicating that influenza virus circulation nationally has remained at similar levels during the past two weeks. Influenza activity is low in New York City (NYC). Respiratory specimens submitted for influenza testing in NYC have continued to be positive for either influenza A or influenza B, though the counts of positive specimens have declined for the past few weeks. Hospitalizations for influenza have started to decrease nationally, and in NYC there has also been a decrease in influenza-like illness (ILI) emergency departments visits and in the number of ILI hospital admissions. However, there continues to be influenza outbreaks in long-term care facilities. There have been 5 influenza-associated pediatric deaths in the U.S. so far this season but none in NYC.

Seasonal influenza activity often follows a bimodal course, so although influenza indicators may currently be decreasing, there may be an increase in influenza activity in a second wave, in the next few weeks. Vaccination should remain a priority in your practice.

Vaccination rates are still lagging behind what they were last season, with the number of flu doses administered to the NYC pediatric population as of January 29, 2022, 11% below what it was last year at this time. With COVID-19 activity decreasing, we encourage you to identify and recall unvaccinated patients and to use Citywide Immunization Registry (CIR) tools to increase pediatric flu vaccine coverage. Go to <https://www1.nyc.gov/assets/doh/downloads/pdf/cir/flu-coverage-report.pdf> for instructions on how to create lists of your patients who still need flu vaccination and to create flu coverage reports. For further instructions on how to create flu coverage reports and for instructions on text-messaging recall, see <https://www1.nyc.gov/assets/doh/downloads/pdf/cir/cir-flu-coverage-and-custom-recall-texting-guide.pdf>

There is ample supply of flu vaccine, both from the Vaccine for Children (VFC) program and from private suppliers. Call (347) 396-2489 for any assistance you need with your VFC flu vaccine order. More information about what products are available for private purchase can be found at <https://www.izsummitpartners.org/ivats/>.

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
Assistant Commissioner
Bureau of Immunization