



December 23, 2022

Jane R. Zucker, MD, MSc
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Dear Colleague:

This is an update on influenza activity and the availability and distribution of seasonal flu vaccine. Influenza activity is elevated across the U.S., including New York City (NYC). Influenza season has started very early and abruptly. Twenty-five percent of respiratory specimens submitted for influenza testing to a sample of NYC laboratory facilities during the week ending December 10, 2022, were positive for influenza, and for the past three weeks the number of positive laboratory reports has been higher than it is during most seasons' peaks. During that same week, there were three influenza-associated pediatric deaths reported in NYC; sixteen influenza outbreaks were reported from long-term care facilities. It is not too late to vaccinate. Flu vaccination should continue to be a high priority at your facility and should continue to be so well into the spring of 2023.

It is important that you redouble your efforts to vaccinate your patients. Pediatric flu vaccination coverage has been decreasing since 2020. Compared to last year at this time, **4.2% fewer children have received flu vaccine**, though improvements in percentage vaccinated have occurred in the last few weeks. The cohort with the greatest decline in vaccination is children aged 5-8 years.

Approximately 173.5 million to 183.5 million flu vaccine doses will be produced nationally and, as of December 10, 2022, almost 158 million doses have already been distributed. In NYC, we have received almost all of the flu vaccine we pre-booked for the Vaccines for Children (VFC) program, and as of December 9th, 65% of those doses have been shipped to providers. Of the flu doses requested by providers nearly all have been distributed. Facilities will receive partial shipments until their orders have been completely shipped. Providers who requested to have their entire order shipped to them by October 31 have received their complete order already. Other facilities will continue to receive partial shipments of flu vaccine until their orders have been completely shipped. You can increase your flu vaccine order and obtain additional doses in the Online Registry, where you placed your initial order. Call (347) 396-2489 for any assistance you need with your VFC flu vaccine order.

As of December 9, 2022, 92% of VFC providers have ordered flu vaccine. All VFC providers are expected to offer flu vaccine to their patients. VFC providers who have not yet ordered flu vaccine should do so immediately. If you need help with your VFC flu order, please call (347) 396-2489. Please do not allow your facility to run out of vaccine; if you need vaccine, contact us before your inventory gets too low.

You can view a list of patients who are not up-to-date for flu according to Citywide Immunization Registry (CIR) records; see [flu-coverage-report.pdf \(nyc.gov\)](#). For instructions to create influenza coverage reports and text-messaging recall, see <https://www1.nyc.gov/assets/doh/downloads/pdf/cir/cir-flu-coverage-and-custom-recall-texting-guide.pdf>.

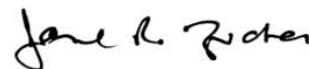
Flu vaccine is still available for purchase for providers and medical facilities who need vaccine for their non-VFC eligible and/or adult populations. More information about what products are available can be found at <https://www.izsummitpartners.org/ivats/>.

The NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene's City Health Information's annual edition on influenza prevention and control is available at [chi-41-3.pdf \(nyc.gov\)](#). In it, you will find information on the impact of influenza disease, strategies for improving flu vaccine coverage, influenza treatment and prophylaxis, availability of flu vaccine administration at pharmacies, and the requirement that children attending child care, school-based child care, Head Start, and prekindergarten programs be vaccinated. Additional information on influenza activity, flu vaccine recommendations, and educational materials are available at www.nyc.gov/flu.

Influenza viruses and the virus that causes COVID-19 are both circulating. We would like to remind you that COVID-19 vaccine, including boosters, and the flu vaccine can be administered at the same visit for those eligible to receive both vaccines.

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". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Jane R. Zucker, MD, MSc