



NEW YORK CITY DEPARTMENT OF
HEALTH AND MENTAL HYGIENE

Dave A. Chokshi, MD, MSc

Commissioner

November 2, 2021

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 is currently low in the U.S., but flu vaccine administration should be a high priority and well underway at your facility. As of 10/21/2021, vaccine manufacturers have distributed 149.9 million doses of the 188 million to 200 million doses of flu vaccine that they expect to distribute nationally for use during the 2021-2022 season.

In New York City (NYC), we have been allocated almost 82% of the total amount of flu vaccine that we pre-booked for the Vaccines for Children (VFC) program, and 69% of this vaccine has been shipped to facilities. Facilities will receive partial shipments until their orders has been completely shipped. All products are in good supply.

As of October 22, 2021, only 81% 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.

Flu vaccination administration to the pediatric population is significantly lower this influenza season compared to last season. As of 10/24/2021, flu vaccination of patients 6 months through 18 years of age is **28% lower**, when compared to the same time last year. Take every opportunity to identify patients who still need their flu vaccine, using [Citywide Immunization Registry \(CIR\) tools](#), and bring them into your office as soon as possible for vaccination. While we recognize it is a busy time, use all evidence-based strategies to increase flu vaccine uptake in your facility; for example, have the option for vaccination-only visits, evening and weekend hours, and vaccination clinics. Strategies for increasing immunization coverage can be found on the [American Academy of Pediatrics website](#).

While it's not possible to say with certainty what will happen in the late fall and winter, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) believes it's likely that influenza viruses and the virus that causes COVID-19 will both be circulating at that time. Relaxed COVID-19 mitigation measures (such as stay-at-home orders and mask mandates) may result in an increase in influenza activity during the upcoming 2021-2022 flu season, when compared with the 2020-2021 season.

COVID-19 vaccine and the flu vaccine can be administered at the same visit. If your eligible patients have not received their recommended COVID-19 vaccine, they should get it as soon as possible.

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,

Jane R. Zucker, MD, MSc