



November 12, 2020

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 remains low in the U.S., as it is in New York City (NYC), though a small percentage of respiratory specimens submitted for influenza testing has come back positive. 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 2021.

Nearly 198 million flu vaccine doses will be produced nationally and, as of November 2, 2020, almost 165 million doses have already been distributed. In NYC, as of November 6, 2020, we have received almost 70% of the total amount of flu vaccine that we pre-booked for the Vaccines for Children (VFC) program, and 97% of those doses have been shipped to providers. Facilities will continue to receive partial shipments of flu vaccine until their orders have been completely shipped. Most 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 orders.

For your pediatric patients, you can identify those who still need to be vaccinated by creating lists in the Online Registry to identify those who still need flu vaccine, and text message them; see <https://www1.nyc.gov/assets/doh/downloads/pdf/cir/cir-flu-coverage-and-custom-recall-texting-guide.pdf> for step-by-step instructions.

We encourage you to vaccinate patients when you see them and as your supply will allow. If you temporarily run out of vaccine, make sure to keep a list of patients who were seen and not vaccinated so that you can call them back to your office when you receive vaccine. Inform those patients that they will be called as soon as vaccine does arrive, and that they should make an appointment to return to your office for the vaccine as soon as possible. Alternatively, you can refer those patients to a facility that does have vaccine, such as pharmacies. For a list of sites with flu vaccine, go to nyc.gov/flu, then click on “Find Your Flu Vaccination on NYC Health Map.” In the left column, click on “Vaccines,” then “Flu Vaccine” (when this selection appears), apply your parameters, and find locations with flu vaccine services.

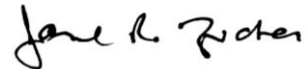
Flu vaccine is still available for purchase for providers and medical facilities who need vaccine for their non-VFC eligible and/or adult populations. More information about what products are available can be found at <https://www.izsummitpartners.org/ivats/>.

We are aware that some private vaccine shipments have been delayed, and that the high-dose and adjuvanted flu vaccine for persons 65 years and older have been harder to obtain this influenza season. If you do not have these formulations on hand, use the standard dose flu vaccine even for your older patients.

The NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene's City Health Information's annual edition on influenza prevention and control is available at <https://www1.nyc.gov/assets/doh/downloads/pdf/chi/chi-39-3.pdf>. 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.

For questions on any immunization issue, other than on ordering VFC flu vaccine, please call (347) 396-2400 or email nycimmunize@health.nyc.gov. We thank you for your continuing efforts at protecting NYC residents from vaccine-preventable diseases.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jane R. Zucker". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial "J" and "Z".

Jane R. Zucker, MD, MSc