



NEW YORK CITY DEPARTMENT OF  
HEALTH AND MENTAL HYGIENE  
Thomas R. Frieden, MD, MPH  
*Commissioner*

**\* PLEASE DISTRIBUTE TO ALL PEDIATRIC, FAMILY PRACTICE AND OFFICE STAFF \***

August 6, 2008

Dear Colleague:

The Bureau of Immunization (BOI) of the New York City (NYC) Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DOHMH) would like all providers to be aware of the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices' (ACIP) recent expansion of the recommendation for influenza vaccination in childhood to include all children 6 months – 18 years of age. Evidence suggests that by reducing influenza transmission among children through immunization, the potential exists to reduce influenza in household contacts, and within the community at large. This new recommendation is to be implemented as soon as feasible, but no later than the 2009–2010 influenza season.

Influenza coverage has been, and continues to be, unacceptably low. This past season, in NYC, only 17.6% of children 6–59 months of age received 2 doses of vaccine as recommended by ACIP, and only 33.5% received one dose. Vaccine effectiveness studies indicate that 2 doses are needed to provide adequate protection during the first season that young children are vaccinated.

The BOI appreciates the challenge presented to providers in providing the two-dose regimen and by the expanded influenza immunization recommendation. To meet this challenge, be certain to order enough vaccine in a timely manner to ensure full coverage of your practice. Furthermore, New York State Public Health Law §2112, effective July 1, 2008, prohibits the administration of vaccines containing more than trace amounts of thimerosal to children less than 3 years of age and to women who know they are pregnant. Be sure to order a sufficient supply of thimerosal-free or single-dose preparations of influenza vaccine to adequately immunize these groups.

Attached please find the **Seasonal Influenza Vaccine Order Form** to be used to order vaccine through the Vaccines for Children (VFC) Program for the 2008–2009 season. Please submit an order for all of the flu vaccines you will need for the entire 2008–2009 season. As vaccines are received, we will send partial orders until your entire order has been filled. You may call the VFC Program at 212-447-8175 at any time to verify your balance. If you require more vaccine, we will do our best to fill second requests based on the amount of vaccine available. Fax your order to 212-447-8196.

The 2008 ACIP Recommendations for the Prevention and Control of Influenza is available at <http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/rr57e717a1.htm>. All doses of any vaccine administered to children <19 years of age in NYC must be reported to the Citywide Immunization Registry: 1-212-676-2323; <http://www.nyc.gov/html/doh/html/cir/index.html>. For professional or technical questions, please call the BOI at 1-212-676-2259. Thank you.

Sincerely,

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

Jane R. Zucker, M.D., M.Sc.  
Assistant Commissioner  
Bureau of Immunization