



NEW YORK CITY DEPARTMENT OF
HEALTH AND MENTAL HYGIENE

Ashwin Vasani, MD, PhD

Commissioner

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Dear Colleague:

This is our last update on influenza activity and the availability and distribution of seasonal flu vaccine for the 2022-2023 season. Seasonal influenza activity continues at low levels across most of the country, including New York City (NYC). Indicators of influenza activity in NYC—including influenza positive lab results, syndromic surveillance of influenza-like illness (ILI) emergency department visits, and the number of ILI admissions—are all low and have been plateaued low over the past two months. Two percent of respiratory specimens submitted for influenza testing to a sample of NYC laboratory facilities during the week ending April 1, 2023, were positive for influenza, and there were no outbreaks reported from long-term care facilities that week. Nationally, there have been 139 pediatric deaths due to influenza this season, including six in NYC. It is not too late to vaccinate your patients who have missed earlier opportunities; the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends annual flu vaccination as long as influenza activity is ongoing. There remains the possibility of another peak of activity this season.

Three CDC networks that evaluate vaccine effectiveness (VE) against laboratory-confirmed influenza-associated outpatient visits, emergency department visits, and hospitalization have released preliminary VE results for the 2022-2023 season. One network estimated vaccine effectiveness at 68% (95% CI: 46,81) against pediatric hospitalizations and 42% (95% CI: 25,56) against pediatric emergency department (ED) visits. A second network estimated VE at 43% (95% CI: 30,54) against adult hospitalizations. A third network estimated VE at 39% (95% CI: 31, 45) against adult hospitalization and 44% (95% CI: 41, 47) against adult ED or urgent care visits. For a more in-depth discussion of these networks and their estimated VE indicators, see the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) presentation at its February meeting, at <https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/acip/meetings/downloads/slides-2023-02/slides-02-22/influenza-03-Olson-Lewis-Tenforde-508.pdf>.

Flu vaccination for children 6 months-18 years of age is 2.8% lower than at the same time last season and has continued to slow over the past few weeks. As of March 25, 2023, 827,848 children aged 6 months to 18 years of age have received at least one flu vaccine dose during the 2022-2023 influenza season, compared to 851,936 children vaccinated by the same time last season. The greatest decline in vaccination continues to be among the 5-8 year-old cohort (6.0% lower than this time last season).

Injectable flu vaccine is still available from the Vaccines for Children (VFC) program; LAIV4 (FluMist® [AstraZeneca]) is not. You can increase your flu vaccine order and obtain additional doses in the Online Registry, where you placed your initial order.

For questions about your flu vaccine order call (347) 396-2489. For all other questions, 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