



NEW YORK CITY DEPARTMENT OF
HEALTH AND MENTAL HYGIENE

Ashwin Vasani, MD, PhD

Commissioner

September 22, 2022

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. Vaccine manufacturers have projected they would provide as many as 173.5 million to 183.5 million doses of flu vaccine nationally for use during the 2022-2023 season. Flu vaccination should be well underway at your facility.

In New York City (NYC), we have been allocated almost 50% of the total amount of flu vaccine that we pre-booked for the Vaccines for Children (VFC) program, and 58% of this vaccine has been shipped to facilities. Facilities will receive partial shipments until their orders have been completely shipped. All products are in good supply.

As of September 16, 2022, only 80% 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.

In our flu vaccine kick-off letter last month, we did not have 2021 data to share with you regarding flu vaccine coverage rates for adults, but these data are now available. Among people 18 years of age and older, 49% reported that they received a flu vaccine, which is similar to what it was in 2020 (unpublished data, 2021 Community Health Survey). The U.S. Healthy People 2030 goal for flu vaccine coverage is 70% for all ages, so New York City is significantly below that among its adult population. Additionally, there were significant inequities in vaccination by race/ethnicity. Compared to non-Latino White adults, adults who identify as non-Latino Black, Latino, and non-Latino Other Race received flu vaccine at lower rates (54.5% vs 40.9%, 45.1%, and 44.3%, respectively). Among adults aged 65 years and older, no differences were seen by race/ethnicity. Overall, 68.5% of older adults reported that they received the flu vaccine; coverage was 67.7%, 65.5%, 70.2%, and 70.8% in non-Latino Black, Latino, non-Latino Asian/Pacific Islander, and non-Latino White older adults, respectively.

COVID-19 vaccine and the flu vaccine can be administered at the same visit. If your patients have not received their recommended COVID-19 vaccine series or booster, they should get it as soon as possible; the flu vaccine should ideally be received by the end of October.

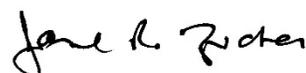
As a reminder, bivalent COVID-19 booster vaccines are now available for people 12 years of age and older and can be given at least 2 months after completion of the primary series or the previous booster dose. A provider letter summarizing the recommendations for use of the bivalent booster, as well as information about ordering vaccine and vaccine storage and handling, can be found [here](#). COVID-19 infection continues to cause hospitalization and deaths among people 65 years of age and older and this population should be prioritized for vaccination. If you do not have vaccine at your facility, facilities with booster vaccine can be found at <https://vaccinefinder.nyc.gov/>.

As has been the case for the past few years, all children six months through 59 months of age enrolled in NYC Article 47 & 43 regulated pre-kindergarten programs (Child Care, Head Start, Nursery or Pre-K) must receive one dose of flu vaccine between July 1st and December 31st of each year. Although some children may need a second dose in order to comply with Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) recommendations, that second dose is not required for school attendance.

Flu vaccination is lagging behind what we saw at the same time last year. Remember to use evidence-based strategies to increase flu vaccination at your facility, including identifying and contacting unvaccinated patients to make an appointment and use of standing orders. Tools are available [here](#) in the Online Registry to help with identifying and sending text messages to your patients.

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
Assistant Commissioner
Bureau of Immunization