



NEW YORK CITY DEPARTMENT OF
HEALTH AND MENTAL HYGIENE
Thomas Farley, MD, MPH
Commissioner

Jane R. Zucker, MD, MSc
Assistant Commissioner
Bureau of Immunization

March 12, 2013

Dear Colleague:

Pre-booking for influenza vaccine for the 2013-14 season has begun. Please note that this applies only for vaccine to be used for your privately (commercially) insured pediatric patients and your adult patients. Pre-booking for Vaccines for Children (VFC) program influenza vaccine will take place during the summer of 2013.

Inactivated influenza vaccines (now being referred to as IIV) will be available as a trivalent formulation (IIV3), containing three strains of influenza antigen (two A strains and one B strain), and as a quadrivalent vaccine (IIV4), containing the same three strains as the trivalent vaccine plus an additional influenza B strain. Although the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices makes no preferential recommendation for any type of vaccine, quadrivalent vaccines offer an advantage by protecting against two influenza B strains. Based on CDC surveillance data (accessed 3/6/13), 72% of the influenza B viruses characterized this season were of the B/Yamagata lineage contained in the trivalent vaccine, while the remaining 28% were of the B/Victoria lineage of viruses. The quadrivalent vaccines will contain B virus antigen from both these lineages.

The only quadrivalent vaccines currently approved by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) are the live attenuated influenza vaccine, FluMist®(MedImmune) (referred to as LAIV4) and Fluarix® (GlaxoSmithKline); Fluarix will be available as both IIV3 and IIV4 in the 2013-14 season. For further guidance, please see the attached document from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Additional quadrivalent influenza vaccines may be approved by the FDA in advance of the 2013-14 season. Further information will be provided as it is available.

In addition, two new trivalent, inactivated vaccines have recently been licensed for people aged 18 years and older. Flucelvax® (Novartis), is a new cell-based vaccine manufactured using mammalian cells instead of traditional chicken eggs and FluBlok® (Protein Sciences Corporation) is a recombinant DNA vaccine that does not use either influenza virus or eggs in its production.

All influenza vaccine products that were available this season are expected to be available for the 2013-14 season; this list and information about new products is available at <http://www.cdc.gov/flu/protect/vaccine/index.htm>

We encourage you to begin planning your influenza vaccination efforts for the fall. Be sure to order the type of vaccine appropriate for patient population and a sufficient quantity of vaccine to increase vaccine coverage in your practice. For current information about influenza, please visit www.nyc.gov/flu. Thank you for helping protect New York City residents from influenza.

Sincerely,

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

Jane R. Zucker, M.D., M.Sc