



NEW YORK CITY DEPARTMENT OF  
HEALTH AND MENTAL HYGIENE  
Ashwin Vasani, MD, PhD  
*Commissioner*

February 6, 2024

Dear Colleague:

This is an update on influenza activity, the availability and distribution of seasonal flu vaccine, respiratory syncytial virus (RSV) activity, and RSV immunization products.

### **Influenza activity and flu vaccines**

Seasonal influenza activity remains elevated across the country, as it is in New York City (NYC). 11,214 influenza positive laboratory test results were reported to the NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DOHMH) during the week ending January 27, 2024, which was an 8% **increase** from the previous week; 85% of these specimens were positive for influenza A, and 14% were positive for influenza B. There were 9 influenza outbreaks reported from long-term care facilities during that week; season to date, a total of 106 outbreaks have occurred in long-term care facilities. Nationally, there have been 65 pediatric deaths due to influenza this season, including three in NYC. 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.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) performs genetic and antigenic characterization of influenza viruses to compare how similar the currently circulating influenza viruses are to the components of the current flu vaccines. Of 107 A(H1N1)pdm09 viruses antigenically characterized this season, all were well-recognized by ferret antisera to the cell-grown A/Wisconsin/67/2022-like reference viruses representing the A(H1N1)pdm09 component of the current flu vaccines. Likewise, all 91 A(H3N2) viruses characterized were well-recognized by ferret antisera to the cell-grown A(H3N2) component of this year's vaccines. Among the 61 influenza B viruses characterized, all were well-recognized to the B/Victoria component of this year's vaccines (there were no influenza B/Yamagata-lineage viruses available for antigenic characterization thus far).

There remains concern regarding the rates of flu vaccination coverage this year. 4.8% fewer NYC children have received flu vaccine this season compared to the same time last season, and there has been an 18.5% decrease in the number of NYC adults 19 years and older that have received at least one flu vaccine dose (that was reported to the Citywide Immunization Registry [CIR]), compared to the same period in the 2022-2023 season. Take every opportunity to identify patients who still need their flu vaccine, using Citywide Immunization Registry (CIR) tools, and bring them into your office as soon as possible for vaccination. Use all evidence-based strategies to increase flu vaccine uptake; for example, have the option for vaccination-only visits, evening and weekend hours, and vaccination clinics. Strategies for increasing immunization coverage can be found on the [American Academy of Pediatrics website](#).

Approximately 173.5 million to 183.5 million flu vaccine doses will be produced nationally and, as of January 27, 2024, 156.76 million doses have already been distributed. In NYC, we have received all of the flu vaccine we pre-booked for the Vaccines for Children (VFC) program and, as of February 2, 2024, 70% of those doses have been shipped to providers. Of the flu doses requested by providers nearly all have been distributed. You can increase your VFC 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 order.

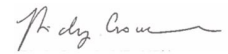
### **RSV activity and RSV immunization products**

RSV activity is elevated but declining in NYC. Supply of the monoclonal antibody that prevents RSV in infants and children, nirsevimab (Beyfortus™), remains limited, but VFC providers can order VFC doses by emailing [nycimmunize@health.nyc.gov](mailto:nycimmunize@health.nyc.gov). Be sure to include your VFC pin number and the quantity of 50 mg and 100 mg doses you would like. The recommendation for nirsevimab administration to infants and young children is

through March 31. Administration of RSVpreF (Abrysvo™) vaccine to pregnant people in order to prevent RSV in infants is no longer recommended this season (the recommendation is for administration only from September through the end of January).

For questions on flu vaccine, other than those pertaining to your VFC order, and on RSV immunization products, please call (347) 396-2400 or email [nycimmunize@health.nyc.gov](mailto:nycimmunize@health.nyc.gov). We thank you for your continuing efforts at protecting NYC residents from influenza and RSV.

Sincerely,



Bindy Crouch, MD, MPH  
Assistant Commissioner  
Bureau of Immunization