



STATE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE
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DIVISION OF PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICES

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TO: Medical Personnel
Office Manager
Vaccine Manager

FROM: Marcella Bobinsky, Program Manager
Immunization Program

RE: Influenza Vaccine, 2008-2009

On February 27, 2008, the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) made new recommendations for use of influenza vaccine for the 2008-2009 influenza season.

- *Annual vaccination for all children aged 6 months through 18 years is recommended. Annual vaccination of children aged 6 months up to their fifth birthday (through 59 months of age) should continue. If feasible, annual vaccination of all children aged 5 years through 18 years should begin in 2008 when the vaccine for the 2008-2009 influenza season becomes available.*
- *Annual vaccination for all children aged 6 months through 18 years should begin no later than during the 2009-2010 influenza season.*

The entire recommendation can be found at www.immunize.org/acip

In recognition of the fact that medical providers will need time to adjust to the increased patient load brought about by the ACIP recommendation, the **New Hampshire Immunization Program will allow for the two-year period to reach the goal of vaccinating ALL children with the influenza vaccine.** The highest priority for vaccine continues to be those children who have a chronic illness that may be exacerbated if infected with influenza. We encourage each community to look at their child and adolescent populations and determine the most effective way to offer the flu vaccine. CDC suggests that, "In many areas, innovative community-based programs in school or other community settings will be needed to supplement vaccination services provided in healthcare practitioners' offices or public health clinics." (CDC)

(MORE)

The New Hampshire Immunization Program (NHIP) purchased childhood and adolescent influenza vaccine assuming that in this first year of the ACIP recommendation, children 6 months to 5 years of age would continue to be vaccinated most often. The older children will require education and encouragement to visit their medical home for a flu vaccination. We will work with community organizations, schools, and media outlets to encourage adolescents to get vaccinated against influenza. We expect that this will require at least a two-year marketing cycle to have an impact.

The distribution of influenza vaccine can vary depending on many factors: vaccine availability, level of morbidity due to influenza, length of the active influenza season, and media attention. In addition, the distribution system for childhood vaccines has shifted from our NH distribution site to the McKesson Distribution Center. McKesson will be shipping influenza vaccine in addition to your regular vaccine orders. NHIP will do everything we can to assure that this process runs efficiently for McKesson and effectively for you.

Influenza vaccine wastage can be costly. NHIP will do everything we can to meet the influenza vaccine demand for children and adolescents in 2008-2009. We will, however, rely on each of our vaccine providers to order only the vaccine that will be administered.

- Each provider will order influenza vaccine monthly, based on the number of patients who will receive the vaccine in that month.
- Please determine if your refrigeration units have adequate space to store additional vaccine. You will need to continue to differentiate between state supplied influenza vaccines and private stock.
- NHIP will monitor 'doses of influenza vaccine on hand' very closely as additional orders are received.
- All influenza vaccine currently ordered is preservative free (pf). When/if NHIP needs to order additional influenza vaccine to meet the demand we cannot guarantee pf vaccine.

NHIP will accept orders for influenza vaccine starting September 15. We will not be able to submit the orders until October 1, 2008, the beginning of the federal fiscal year. As you plan flu appointments and clinics, allow at least three weeks (from October 1) for delivery of state supplied childhood/adolescent influenza vaccines.

For additional information, please contact the Immunization Program at 271-4482.