

January 25, 2013

To: Pharmacists, Local Health Departments (LHDs), Health Care Providers, Hospitals

From: New York State Department of Health, Bureau of Immunization

**HEALTH ADVISORY: UPDATED GUIDANCE ON OBTAINING
AVAILABLE INFLUENZA VACCINE FOR
CHILDREN**

**Please distribute to the Pharmacy Directors, Infection Control Department,
Emergency Department, Employee Health Service, Infectious Disease Department,
Director of Nursing, Medical Director, Laboratory Service, and all patient care areas.**

This advisory is to notify medical providers in New York State about

- 1. The availability of influenza vaccine from Sanofi Pasteur and**
- 2. The ability and proper procedure to use influenza vaccine supplied by the Vaccines for Children (VFC) Program for children who are privately insured.**

SUMMARY/BACKGROUND

- New York State (NYS) influenza activity level was categorized as widespread for the ninth consecutive week. In addition, four influenza-associated pediatric deaths have been confirmed in NYS this season. For these reasons, as well as insufficient levels of vaccine, Governor Andrew M. Cuomo has declared a “Disaster Emergency” for New York State.
- **The NYSDOH encourages providers, who currently have continued need for additional doses of influenza vaccine, to use the IVATS tool (<http://www.preventinfluenza.org/ivats/>) to identify vaccine availability. As of 1/25/13, Sanofi Pasteur is taking orders for 0.5 mL single dose vials of Fluzone.**
- In light of the challenges being experienced during the 2012–2013 influenza season, CDC has explored possible options to make excess Vaccines for Children (VFC) influenza vaccine in provider offices available for use with privately insured pediatric patients. This is a one-time occurrence to address vaccine supply issues during the 2012–2013 influenza season only. Providers with (1) excess VFC influenza vaccine in their offices and (2) unmet need among other pediatric patients they expect to serve during the current influenza season are able to apply to participate by filling out the necessary information as outlined below.
- In addition, due to the severe influenza season and insufficient levels of vaccine, the New York State Commissioner of Health is authorizing use of influenza vaccines containing more than the mercury levels described in Public Health Law (PHL) §2112 in pregnant women and children under age 3. Therefore, vaccine containing any level of thimerosal can be administered to children under 3 years of age and pregnant women. For more information go to http://www.health.ny.gov/diseases/communicable/influenza/seasonal/providers/2013-01-12_thimerosal_waiver_letter.htm.

- To assist in vaccination efforts across the State, influenza vaccine redistribution among parties who currently have an ample or adequate vaccine supply, vaccine purchased for privately insured patients should also be considered. You may contact your LHD if you have vaccine you would like to redistribute. In addition, the NYSDOH has created a page on the Health Commerce System (HCS) to allow providers with vaccine to redistribute and those in need of vaccine to post their information on a secure site. Please visit <https://commerce.health.state.ny.us> and click on Vaccine Availability.

TRANSFER OF CDC VFC INFLUENZA VACCINE- GENERAL INFORMATION

This Transfer Program authorized by CDC is unprecedented and is being implemented to address complex and time-sensitive vaccine supply issues during the current influenza season. Several parameters and controls have been put into place to ensure that VFC eligible children are not negatively impacted by this initiative. Further, this initiative does not constitute a permanent change in VFC policy. This is a one-time occurrence to address vaccine supply issues during the 2012–2013 influenza season only.

If you are a provider with (1) excess VFC influenza vaccine in your office(s) and (2) unmet need among other pediatric patients you expect to serve during the current influenza season, you may be eligible to participate in the VFC Transfer Program. Providers with excess VFC influenza vaccine are defined as those with VFC doses on hand over and above those required to fully serve all VFC children reasonably anticipated to present for care in your practice(s) during the remainder of the 2012-2013 influenza season.

TRANSFER OF VFC INFLUENZA VACCINE- PROTOCOL

All providers participating in the transfer program for VFC influenza vaccine must provide a written, signed statement (email is acceptable) in which you certify your understanding and agreement with the following:

- a. You will be able to meet the needs of all VFC eligible children in your practice with the VFC doses remaining after the transfer,
- b. You understand that this is one-time allowance specifically for the transfer of influenza vaccine during the 2012–2013 season only,
- c. This is a one-time initiative that **does not** constitute a change in VFC policy, and
- d. You will not bill the patient or insurance provider for the vaccine, but may seek reimbursement for the vaccine administration fee.

If you meet the criteria outline above, please also complete the attached spreadsheet and return with your statement via email (immunize@health.state.ny.us). The information required to complete the spreadsheet includes:

- a. Provider name
- b. Provider VFC PIN
- c. Provider address

- d. For each influenza vaccine NDC on hand that was obtained as part of the VFC pre-book process and that you would like to transfer for use in non-VFC eligible pediatric patients, the following information is needed by NDC:
 - i. Number of VFC doses on hand
 - ii. Number of VFC doses needed to complete VFC vaccination
 - iii. Number of VFC doses considered excess supply
 - iv. Number of VFC doses that you would like to transfer for use in non VFC eligible pediatric patients (must be in package size amounts)

Upon submission of your VFC influenza vaccine information, the NYSDOH Bureau of Immunization will notify CDC. The CDC will review all submitted information and render a decision on whether the use of VFC vaccine in non-VFC eligible children in your practice is approved.

*****PLEASE NOTE: Providers should NOT begin using VFC influenza vaccine doses in non-VFC eligible children until notified by the NYSDOH Bureau of Immunization that they may do so. To do so without prior authorization will be considered fraud. *****

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

For any additional questions related to VFC influenza vaccine transfers, please contact the New York State Department of Health Bureau of Immunization at 518-473-4437 or immunize@health.state.ny.us.