



STATE OF NEW YORK
DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

Corning Tower The Governor Nelson A. Rockefeller Empire State Plaza Albany, New York 12237

Richard F. Daines, M.D.
Commissioner

James W. Clyne, Jr.
Executive Deputy Commissioner

February 4, 2010

Dear Hospital Administrator,

The New York State Department of Health is encouraging health care facilities to pre-book influenza vaccine now to ensure that a sufficient amount of vaccine will be available to protect their vulnerable patients and employees for the 2010-2011 influenza season.

Timeliness in placing your order for influenza vaccine is a critical component of your purchasing plan. Influenza vaccines take months to produce and vaccine manufacturers are hesitant to take on the risk of producing products they will be unable to sell. As a result, pre-booking vaccine orders generally takes place in January or February, even though most health systems are still administering influenza vaccine for the current influenza season.

There are several groups in addition to your regular patient population who you should consider in estimating your facility's influenza vaccine need:

On July 31, 2009, Governor Paterson signed into law an amendment to Public Health Law (PHL) section 2805-h that requires all general hospitals with neonatal intensive care units (NICUs) to offer influenza vaccination annually, between September 1 and April 1, to all persons who are parents or are reasonably anticipated to be caregivers in the households of newborns being treated in NICUs.

PHL 2805-h also contains a requirement that the administrative officer or other person in charge of each general hospital must offer to each admitted person age 65 years or older vaccination against influenza virus. The requirement, effective since 2006, applies annually between September 1 and April 1.

Lastly, the New York State Department of Health anticipates adopting as a permanent regulation the emergency amendment to 10 NYCRR Title 10, Section 66-3 last year which was suspended due to vaccine shortages. This would require that all personnel employed at hospitals receive annual vaccinations against influenza. The primary purpose of this regulation is to protect the health and safety of vulnerable patients, whose risk of serious adverse events from influenza is high. There is a large body of evidence that health care workers can pose a risk to patients by transmitting influenza infection; this risk can be lessened significantly by health care worker vaccination. An added benefit is to maintain a healthy workforce during influenza season.

It is important that your institution develop an influenza vaccine purchasing plan that allows you to meet the needs of your patients and regulatory requirements. You should be reviewing your influenza vaccine purchasing options and assess the needs of your organization. For more information on distributors and influenza vaccine availability, please visit the following websites:

Influenza Vaccine Distributor Information
<http://www.flusupplynews.com/resources.cfm>

Influenza Vaccine Availability Tracking System (IVATS)
http://www.preventinfluenza.org/ivats/ivats_healthcare.asp

We strongly encourage you to plan for the next influenza season and order influenza vaccine now. Should you need further assistance, please call the NYSDOH Bureau of Immunization at 518-473-4437.

Sincerely,


Guthrie S. Birkhead, M.D., M.P.H.
Deputy Commissioner
Office of Public Health


Richard M. Cook
Deputy Commissioner
Office of Health Systems Management