HEALTH ADVISORY: Increase in COVID-19 Pediatric Hospitalizations Across New York State

Please distribute to the Chief Medical Officer; Departments of Pediatrics, Family Medicine, and Internal Medicine; Director of Nursing; Pharmacy Director; and primary care clinics

To: Healthcare Providers, Healthcare Facilities, Pharmacies, and Local Health Departments
From: New York State Department of Health (NYSDOH)

NYSDOH is closely monitoring an upward trend in pediatric hospitalizations associated with COVID-19.

- The recent increases are concentrated in New York City and the surrounding greater metropolitan area. The sharpest rise is in New York City, with admissions rising 4-fold from the week, based on data from December 5, 2021 to the week starting December 19, 2021.

- Approximately half of the admissions are <5 years of age and thus vaccine ineligible.

- For the most recent week (December 19, 2021) none of the 5-11 year-old patients was fully vaccinated (compared to 16.1% overall in that age group), and only one-quarter (23%) of 12-17 year-old patients (7 patients out of 30 admissions) were fully vaccinated (compared to 64% in that age group).

Suggested Interventions


- Continue to strongly recommend COVID-19 vaccination for children age 5 and up and boosters for those eligible; discuss vaccination with your patients and parents at every opportunity.

- Remind parents not to assume a mild respiratory illness is a routine “cold”; test for COVID-19. Counsel parents that although COVID-19 is usually mild in children, there are risks of serious illness and sequelae for children, and if not isolated they can contribute to community transmission.

- Continue to recommend other appropriate mitigation measures such as wearing a well-fitting mask, social distancing, and avoidance of crowds.

- Emphasize the importance of isolation and quarantine to avoid spreading COVID-19 to others. Remind families that if they use a home test and get a positive result, they need to self-isolate and inform close contacts of the exposure.

Resources:

- NYS Hospitalization data: https://coronavirus.health.ny.gov/daily-hospitalization-summary
- NYS Mass Vaccination Site Scheduler: https://am-i-eligible.covid19vaccine.health.ny.gov/
- Get vaccinated and boosted today: https://www.vaccines.gov/
- Find a testing site in New York State: https://coronavirus.health.ny.gov/find-test-site-near-you
- NYS VaxtoSchool: https://covid19vaccine.health.ny.gov/nys-vaxtoschool-pop-locations