



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 8, 2010

DAL HCBS: 10-03
Subject: Pre-Booking Influenza Vaccine

Dear 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.

In estimating your facility's influenza vaccine needs, it will be important for you to also consider that 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 regulation required hospitals, diagnostic and treatment centers licensed under Article 28 of the Public Health Law (PHL), certified home health agencies, licensed home care services agencies, long term home health programs (including AIDS home care programs), licensed under Article 36 of the PHL, and hospice programs certified under Article 40 of the PHL to document that all personnel employed by these health care organizations receive annual vaccinations against influenza. Nursing homes, adult homes and adult day treatment facilities and any other organization providing residential housing and supportive services to 5 or more persons, over the age of 65 who are unrelated to the operator are not affected by this regulation.

The primary purpose of the emergency amendment to 10 NYCRR Title 10, Section 66-3 was 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



Mark L. Kissinger
Deputy Commissioner
Office of Long Term Care