

MEMO

TO: Prevention Partnership Providers and
Local Public Health Units

FROM: Miranda Baumgartner *MB*
Vaccines for Children/QI Coordinator

RE: 2020 - 2021 State-Supplied Seasonal Influenza Vaccine

DATE: August 10, 2020

The North Dakota Department of Health (NDDoH) Immunization Program is supplying seasonal influenza vaccine for the 2020 - 2021 season to Vaccines for Children (VFC) enrolled providers for use in those children who are **VFC eligible**. This includes children 18 years and younger who are either Medicaid-eligible, American Indian, uninsured or underinsured. During the 2020 – 2021 influenza season the NDDoH Immunization Program will also be supplying influenza vaccine for uninsured adults.

Distribution:

VFC providers pre-booked influenza vaccine with the NDDoH in early 2020. The NDDoH Immunization Program will allocate influenza vaccine to providers equitably based on what was pre-booked and how much vaccine has been allocated to the NDDoH. State-supplied influenza vaccine will be distributed by McKesson, the third-party distributor for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Vaccine will be distributed in multiple shipments in late summer/early fall. Providers can expect their first shipments of state-supplied influenza vaccine in August or early September. An automated email will be sent out to the primary and secondary VFC vaccine contacts when an influenza vaccine order has shipped. Additional influenza vaccine cannot be ordered by providers until all pre-booked influenza vaccine has been distributed. Providers will be notified when ordering for additional influenza vaccine is available.

For providers that prebooked adult influenza vaccine, this vaccine will be delivered starting in August or early September just as all other doses. NDDoH has secured additional doses of influenza vaccine anticipating a higher than normal interest in influenza vaccination. Once prebooked doses have been sent out, influenza vaccine doses will be available for order for both pediatric and adult eligible patients.

Borrowing:

For seasonal influenza vaccine, providers may use privately purchased influenza vaccine to vaccinate VFC eligible children, if VFC influenza vaccine is not yet available. Those private doses administered to VFC eligible children can later be replaced when VFC vaccine becomes available.

However, VFC vaccine is not always guaranteed, and providers run the risk of not having private doses repaid.

Two-Dose Recommendation for Children Ages Six Months – Eight Years:

- Children ages six months through eight years receiving influenza vaccine for the first time require two doses, at least four weeks apart.
- For the 2020- 2021 influenza season, the recommendations have not changed since the previous influenza season. For any child who has received two or more doses of influenza vaccine prior to July 1, 2020, only one dose is recommended for this influenza season. Consideration of type of influenza vaccine is unnecessary. The number of doses given prior to July 1, 2020 is the only consideration necessary.
- Children who are 8 years old and need two doses of influenza vaccine should still receive the second dose even if they turn 9 between doses one and two.
- See the attached *Influenza Vaccine Algorithm* for more information.

Importance of Influenza Vaccination

Everyone 6 months and older should get an influenza vaccine every season. Vaccination to prevent flu is particularly important for people who are at high risk of developing serious flu complications, especially during the current COVID-19 pandemic.

There are many ways that providers can work to ensure that everyone 6 months and older are being vaccinated. Vaccinating patients at every medical encounter, the use of mobile or offsite clinics, offering vaccines at the employer office or during mandatory trainings and meetings, partnering with larger healthcare systems to provide vaccinations and providing free vaccine at the workplace are just a few ways to increase access to influenza vaccines.

A helpful resource from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention on vaccinating during a pandemic can be found here: www.cdc.gov/vaccines/pandemic-guidance/index.html.

Timing of Vaccination:

Balancing considerations regarding the unpredictability of timing of onset of the influenza season and concerns that vaccine-induced immunity might wane over the course of a season, it is recommended that vaccination should be offered by the end of October. Children aged 6 months through 8 years who require two doses should receive their first dose as soon as possible after vaccine becomes available, to allow the second dose (which must be administered ≥ 4 weeks later) to be received by the end of October. For those requiring only one dose of influenza vaccine for the season, early vaccination (i.e., July or August) is likely to be associated with suboptimal immunity before the end of the influenza season, particularly among older adults.

Changes in Fluzone® High Dose and Flud®:

Both Fluzone® High Dose and Flud® influenza vaccines that are licensed for adults 65 years and older will be quadrivalent for the 2020 – 2021 influenza season.

Important Reminders About Influenza Vaccination:

- The 2020 - 2021 trivalent vaccine contains strains: A/Guangdong-Maonan/SWL1536/2019 (H1N1) pdm09-like virus, A/Hong Kong/2671/2019 (H3N2)-like virus and B/Washington/02/2019 (B/Victoria lineage)-like virus. The quadrivalent vaccine contains one additional B/Phuket/3073/2013- like (Yamagata lineage) strain.
- When entering influenza vaccines into your electronic medical record and/or into the North Dakota Immunization Information System (NDIIS), it is important to make sure you are entering the correct type of influenza vaccine. Please see the attached NDIIS flu vaccine abbreviation guide. It is also available at www.health.nd.gov/immunize/providers/resources.
- The minimum interval between doses of influenza vaccines is four weeks.
- Live-attenuated influenza vaccine should not be administered until 48 hours after cessation of influenza antiviral therapy.
- If influenza antiviral medications are administered within 2 weeks after receipt of live-attenuated influenza vaccine, the vaccine dose should be repeated 48 or more hours after the last dose of antiviral medication.
- Due to limited safety data, non-adjuvanted influenza vaccines may be considered when giving another vaccine containing a novel adjuvant (i.e., Shingrix[®], Hecplisav-B[®]); vaccination should not be delayed if a specific product is not available.
- During influenza vaccination season, and at all times of the year, it is critically important that clinic staff who administer vaccines avoid injury to patients' shoulders by being knowledgeable about how to properly administer intramuscular injections in the deltoid muscle. Shoulder injury related to vaccine administration (SIRVA) can be prevented by ensuring that staff who administer vaccines recognize the anatomic landmarks for identifying the deltoid muscle and use proper intramuscular administration technique.

Vaccine Information Statements:

Influenza Vaccine Information Statements (VISs) are available from the CDC at <http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/hcp/vis/index.html>. Providers are responsible for printing and supplying their own VISs. The National Childhood Vaccine Injury Compensation Act of 1986 requires that immunization providers provide a copy of the applicable VIS for each vaccine administered. The VISs was updated in August of 2019, so if providers have stock from the previous influenza season they may continue to use them.

Influenza Educational Materials:

The NDDoH has influenza vaccine posters, flu stickers and buttons that are available for order. Providers should visit the following website to see a preview of the poster and to order copies: www.health.nd.gov/immunize/providers.

Please feel free to contact the NDDoH Immunization Program with any questions or concerns at 701.328.3386 or toll-free at 800.472.2180.