

Influenza Vaccine Bulletin #1

May 22, 2003

Influenza Season 2003-04

The National Immunization Program (NIP) of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) publishes and distributes periodic bulletins to update partners about recent developments related to the production, distribution and administration of influenza vaccine. All recipients of this bulletin are encouraged to distribute each issue widely to colleagues, members and constituents.

Influenza Vaccine Supply and Production

2003-2004 Influenza Vaccine Strains

- The 2003-2004 influenza vaccine formulation includes A/New Caledonia/20/99-like (H1N1), A/Panama/2007/99 (H3N2), and B/Hong Kong/330/2001-like virus strains, exactly the same as in 2002.

The FDA does not recommend the use of any vaccine beyond its expiration date. Influenza vaccine produced in 2002 outdates June 30, 2003.

- The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has issued a statement, posted on its web site at <http://www.fda.gov/cber/flu/flu.htm>, to address issues concerning last season's influenza vaccine.

Place orders now for influenza vaccine!

- Healthcare providers who have not yet placed influenza vaccine orders should do so as soon as possible.

Additional information on sources of vaccine can be found at http://www.hida.org/link_frame.asp?URL=http://www.hida.org/govtrelations/flulinks.asp, a service provided by the Health Industry Distributors Association.

Projection for This Year's Influenza Vaccine Supply

- Vaccine manufacturers Aventis Pasteur and Powderject Vaccines (which produces the Evans vaccines brand) project an aggregate total of 80-85 million doses of influenza vaccine for the U.S. market this year. This is 10-15 million doses below last year's total, yet still greater than the estimated 79 million doses that were sold to end-users in 2002.

Influenza Vaccine Distribution and Administration

The new influenza vaccine recommendations of the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) were published in the *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report (MMWR)* on April 25, 2003. The recommendations include the following information on the timing of vaccination for at-risk and target groups.

- “The optimal time to receive influenza vaccine continues to be October and November. However, because of vaccine distribution delays during 2000-2002, ACIP recommends that vaccination efforts in October focus on persons aged ≥ 50 years and those aged 6-23 months, persons aged 2-49 years with certain medical conditions that place them at increased risk for influenza-related complications, children aged < 9 years receiving influenza vaccine for the first time, health-care workers, and household contacts of persons at high risk, and that vaccination of other groups begin in November.”

To view the entire document, go to <http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/PDF/rr/rr5208.pdf>.

New Medicare payment rates for Influenza/ Pneumococcal/ Hepatitis B Vaccine Administration are effective March 1, 2003.

- Medicare’s 2003 vaccine administration rate allowances average \$7.72 for 2003, a 94% increase over 2002. The rates range from \$5.34 to \$10.98 depending on geographic location. To determine the rate for a specific locale, go to: <http://www.cms.hhs.gov/preventiveservices/2.asp>. (Select “03 Pay Rates” from the orange box on the right to download the Excel table.)

The payment rate for the 2003 vaccine has not yet been determined.

Amendment to Medicare Standing Orders Rule

- The Centers for Medicare and Medicaid published a rule on October 2, 2002 which eliminates the physician signature requirement for the administration of influenza and pneumococcal vaccinations from the Conditions of Participation for Medicare and Medicaid participating hospitals, long-term care facilities, and home health agencies.

Influenza and pneumococcal vaccines can now be administered per physician-approved facility or agency policy following the assessment of contraindications. (ACIP recommendations – MMWR January 31, 2003: Vol. 52(04); Pg. 68-69 <http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/PDF/wk/mm5204.pdf>)

Influenza Vaccine Communications

- The 2003 Influenza Vaccine Summit was held on May 20-21 in Chicago. Additional information about the summit can be found at <http://www.ama-assn.org/ama/pub/article/1826-6268.html>
 - For information regarding influenza vaccine and related issues, visit <http://www.cdc.gov/nip/flu> on CDC’s website.
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