



## NATIONAL INFLUENZA VACCINE SUMMIT NEWSLETTER

# *Influenza Activity Spotlights*

Friday, September 26, 2008

Issue #5

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### Professional Medical Organizations

**Please disseminate widely to all of your members.**

1. The NFID National Influenza Press Conference, which for many serves as the unofficial launch of influenza season, was held on September 24 at 10 AM at the National Press Club in Washington, DC. You can see the entire conference or download handouts and other materials at <http://www.visualwebcaster.com/NFID-NewsConference-2008>. You will have to register. Included with this newsletter are several items that were available at the conference; this includes the [conference agenda](#), a [press release](#), a list of [online resources](#) on influenza and pneumococcal disease, and [press contacts](#); background discussions on [influenza](#) and [pneumococcal](#); information about [influenza vaccine](#) and [influenza surveillance](#); findings from a recent national [consumer survey](#); and colored maps of the most recent vaccination coverage rates for adults 65+ years for [influenza](#) and [pneumococcal](#) disease.
2. The video vignette "Why Flu Vaccination Matters" is up on U-Tube at the following URL: <http://www.youtube.com/user/cdcflu>. This powerful six and half-minute video, created by the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) in collaboration with Families Fighting Flu (FFF), features the personal stories of parents who have tragically lost or nearly lost a child to influenza. "Why Flu Vaccination Matters: Personal Stories from Families Affected by Flu" intertwines the stories of these parents with the facts about influenza as explained by Dr. Jeanne Santoli, Deputy Director of the National Center for Immunization and Respiratory Diseases at the CDC.  
  
The video carries a strong message, underscoring the fact that influenza is serious and more than 20,000 children are hospitalized every year due to influenza-related complications and some children tragically die. Vaccination is the best and most effective way to help prevent the spread and potentially serious complications of the disease, especially for young children and children with chronic illnesses such as asthma.  
  
The video was directed by Emmy award-winning Mustapha Khan, creator of "House on Fire," and Emmy-nominated Tommy Walker, co-director of "God Grew Tired of Us: The Story of Lost Boys of Sudan." To obtain a free DVD with both an unabridged as well as a one-minute abridged version, please [email](#) or call Adele Viskin at the Academy for Educational Development or (202) 884-8526.
3. The Healthcare Industry Distributors Association (HIDA) annual Influenza Vaccine Production & Distribution Market Brief (detailing the 2007-2008 season) will be released at the end of this month. People can contact Melia Sandler directly at [Sandler@HIDA.org](mailto:Sandler@HIDA.org) for more information. Please also visit [www.FluSupplyNews.com](http://www.FluSupplyNews.com) for additional news and resources on influenza vaccine distribution.
4. On September 24, Families Fighting Flu (FFF) launched the 2008 campaign for "Say Boo to the Flu." This campaign was first started in 2007 to great success. FFF will be staging the campaign at 12 different cities in the United States, beginning in Atlanta. Additionally, on the same day, FFF also re-

launched a new and expanded Web site ([view press release](#)). Please go to [www.familiesfightingflu.org](http://www.familiesfightingflu.org) to check it out! For more information, [contact Laura Scott](#) of FFF.

5. The American Lung Association's Influenza Vaccination clinic locator, [Flu Clinic Locator](#), went live on September 16. Those offering influenza clinics and who want to be listed on the locator will find a link to do so. As part of being on the locator, those offering clinics will need to undergo a brief 10-minute training so that they can update the information pertaining to their clinics regularly. The ALA locator also provides a link to clinics that are being offered by public health departments and facilities.
6. The [September 19 Summit Newsletter](#) provided detailed information from CMS about Medicare payment rates through the end of 2008. Please be sure to take a look at it if you have not done so.
7. Keep an eye out for the release of the nomination forms for the 2008-2009 Summit awards. There are four categories for nominations: (1) Overall Season Activities (with emphasis on later season activities); (2) Healthcare Worker Campaign (community or institutional-based activities, or both); (3) 18 years and under Campaign (programs targeted to patients age 18 years and younger) and (4) Corporate Campaign (programs developed by communication/public relations organizations and/or supported by manufacturers, distributors or other for profit entities).
8. As part of the discussion on the Wednesday, September 24 Summit conference call, it was brought up that some insurance companies that used to cover influenza vaccinations liberally are pulling back on their coverage (e.g., a company that used to cover influenza vaccination with no co-pay regardless of where the vaccination occurred is now asking their policyholders to go to their healthcare provider to get vaccinated). There was an inquiry as to whether anyone else in the Summit is seeing insurance coverage of influenza vaccination being curtailed. Please send any comments you may have on this issue to [LJ Tan](#) and [Mitch Rothholz](#), chair of the Summit's Payment Working Group.
9. It was also mentioned on the Wednesday call that there will be an article published in next week's *Pediatrics* journal that summarizes pediatric deaths due to influenza for the past three seasons. It is likely that some press interest may result from this.
10. Finally, it was also brought up on the Wednesday call that VFC influenza vaccine is being delivered on schedule. Though some providers are getting their private sector vaccine sooner, it is a reflection that not everyone can get their vaccine at the same time. For CDC contracts, the vaccine is shipping in waves - in August, September, and October. Overall, CDC began getting vaccine at McKesson (their distributor) in mid-August and will have more than half of its vaccine at McKesson to fill provider orders by the end of September. This does not mean that vaccine distribution is slow, it simply is a mirror of what is also seen in the private sector, which is a reflection of the new paradigm, and that is, everyone cannot have all of their vaccine in August. And, this is why the ACIP recommendations have evolved to advise providers to begin vaccinating as soon as vaccine becomes available and then keep vaccinating until the season is over.
11. National Influenza Vaccination Week (NIVW) is December 8 through December 14, 2008. This is the third year that the NIVW campaign will be conducted to improve post-Thanksgiving influenza immunization rates. Again, it is important that this is about immunizing more vulnerable people, it is NOT about having more time to immunize the same patient base.
12. To volunteer for the various working groups that have formed for this upcoming season, please email [Jim Harrison](#) and [L.J. Tan](#). The working groups are (1) Communications/Consumer; (2) Health Care Provider; (3) Payment; (4) Occupational Health.
13. The National Influenza Vaccine Summit web site has evolved into a national leading resource for all things related to influenza. Please share this important resource with your colleagues: [www.preventinfluenza.org](http://www.preventinfluenza.org).