Influenza Activity Spotlight

2012–2013 Season

Issue #12 — January 11, 2013

Reminder: Summit calls are scheduled weekly every Thursday at 3 p.m. ET, unless cancelled. The next Summit call is scheduled for January 17, 2013. Please email L.J. Tan or LaDora Woods if you have any updates on activities to provide to the Summit.

SAVE THE DATE! The National Influenza Vaccine Summit (NIVS) will be meeting in conjunction with the National Adult Immunization Summit on May 14–16, 2013 in Atlanta, Georgia. More details and a draft agenda will be provided as soon as available.

1. Summary of the National Influenza Vaccine Summit Call – 1/10/2013

Influenza Surveillance Update – Scott Epperson (CDC)

Although significant influenza activity is occurring, Scott noted there has been little change from earlier reports as far as the predominant viruses and the similarity between circulating viruses and vaccine strains. H3N2 remains the principal strain found in tested specimens, with 325 of 327 being similar to the vaccine strain. Although the number of H1N1 specimens was lower than H3N2, all were similar to the vaccine. The type B specimens tested remain a mix of 2 lineages. Approximately 2/3 (118/177) are from the Yamagata lineage, which is contained in this season’s vaccine, and the remaining 1/3 (59/177) were the Victoria strain, which is not included in the vaccine.

Additional surveillance tools indicated continuing widespread influenza morbidity. The P&I Mortality data, which typically lags behind other indicators, was above the epidemic threshold for the first time this season. (In response to a question, Scott explained that the epidemic threshold is a statistical value based on a seasonal curve, so the exact level changes from week to week.) Two additional laboratory-confirmed pediatric deaths have been reported, bringing the total to 20 for this season. Of these, 7 were type B, 6 were H3, and 7 were type A, but not subtyped. One of the 20 children was too young for vaccination. Of the remaining 19, only 2 (11%) were vaccinated. Influenza-associated hospitalizations remain highest in adults older than 65 years of age. The vast majority (92.5%) of hospitalized adults had an underlying condition, with metabolic disorders, cardiovascular disease, obesity, and lung disease being reported most frequently. For hospitalized children, 57.9% had an underlying condition, most frequently reported as asthma or a neurologic condition. Although the percentage of healthcare visits related to influenza-like illness (ILI) fell slightly from the previous week, it remains high and varies from region to region in the country, with some areas just now reporting large increases.

Summit partners asked about the potential for embargoed sharing of updated data, but CDC is unable to share data prior to the official release each Friday. Partners also asked about an apparent increase in media reports of persons developing influenza in spite of being vaccinated. Scott said CDC has reviewed this, but there is no evidence that this caused by vaccine failure. No vaccine is 100% effective, and we should expect to see some persons becoming ill in spite of a vaccine history. Carolyn Bridges added that the last time we experienced a severe H3N2 season was 2003-2004. Because vaccine recommendations have expanded since that time to include children and young
adults, a larger proportion of the population has been vaccinated, and we would anticipate an increase in the number of vaccinated persons who might subsequently develop influenza. However, morbidity/mortality in 2003-2004 was much more severe, with, for example, dozens of pediatric deaths having occurred by this time in the season. Carolyn noted that additional information on this issue will be available in an article about mid-season vaccine effectiveness to be published in tomorrow’s *MMWR*. Finally, a question was asked about media reports of persons being infected with more than one strain of influenza. Scott stated that co-infections were possible, but not common.

**Influenza Vaccine Supply and HealthMap Vaccine Finder – Carolyn Bridges (CDC)**

Carolyn reported that as of December 4, 128 of the 135 million doses of influenza vaccine projected to be manufactured this year have been distributed. However, data is unavailable on the specific location (e.g., distributor or provider office) of this vaccine. CDC hopes to be able to update this distribution estimate next week. Temporary shortages of vaccine have been reported from some areas. Carolyn and L.J reminded callers about using the Influenza Vaccine Availability Tracking System (IVATS) to find vaccine available for purchase from distributors and manufacturers. (IVATS contains updated information through today.) This site is proving valuable to providers, and members of the general public seeking vaccine are being referred to HealthMap’s Vaccine Finder. To help decrease public frustration, efforts have been renewed to ensure information on the Vaccine Finder site is updated and accurate. It is not too late for providers who have vaccine to register to be included in this site. As noted on previous Summit calls, the Vaccine Finder will soon transition to a site covering availability of all recommended vaccines.

In order to gain a general sense of vaccine availability, Summit partners have just received a brief questionnaire assessing the number of doses they have left to administer. Membership organizations should share this questionnaire with their members and ask them to respond individually. Information will continue to be gathered through January 18.

Katie Gorscak with HHS noted that the federal influenza website now contains an infographic. This information currently is being developed into a media graphic. Partners with questions may contact Katie Gorscak directly.

Finally, a question was asked about the source of recent news reports indicating 112 million Americans had received influenza vaccine. Carolyn noted CDC published this number as an estimate (derived from early season surveys) during National Influenza Vaccination Week.

**Other Items – L.J Tan (IAC)**

L.J and Carolyn closed the meeting by thanking Katie Gorscak at HHS and HealthMap for their work in sharing influenza information. They also acknowledged the value of the work conducted by Diane Peterson of the Immunization Action Coalition in maintaining the IVATS system.

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2. **The CDC/Influenza Division Weekly Influenza Surveillance Report** ending week 1, 2013 (ending January 5, 2013) is available [here](#). Of 12,876 specimens tested and reported by U.S. World Health Organization (WHO) and National Respiratory and Enteric Virus Surveillance System (NREVSS) collaborating laboratories in week 1, 4,222 (32.8%) were positive for influenza. The proportion of outpatient visits for influenza-like illness (ILI) was 4.3%, well above the national baseline of 2.2%. This site also includes maps of ILINet State Activity levels and the geographic spread of influenza illness as reported by state and territorial epidemiologists. This map indicates geographic spread of influenza viruses but does not measure the intensity of influenza activity. CDC’s Seasonal Influenza Key Points for January 11, 2013 have been released. Archives of previous FluViews may be found [here](#).

3. **Information from CDC**

CDC hosted a media conference to provide an update on influenza in the United States and to provide an update on effectiveness of the influenza vaccine for 2012–2013 season. The vaccine
effectiveness update was based upon an article that was published in the MMWR on January 11. A transcript of the media briefing and key points from the MMWR are now available. Examples of media coverage area are available from ABC News, The Boston Herald and the Examiner.

4. Summit Performing Survey on Vaccine Supply

All Summit partners should have received a survey on Survey Monkey regarding vaccine supply. The survey is entirely anonymous. Partners who have not yet participated are asked to respond here. The survey will remain open until Friday, January 18, 2013.

5. CDC Seeks Information on Vaccination Uptake Following NIVW!

Do any Summit partners have data that shows an increase in influenza vaccine uptake following National Influenza Vaccination Week (NIVW)? If so, CDC would like them to send this information to LaDora Woods by January 18. CDC is particularly interested in seeing if NIVW had an impact on doses administered.

6. Summit Relaunches the Influenza Vaccine Availability Tracking System (IVATS)

In response to Hurricane Sandy and possible losses of seasonal influenza vaccine among vaccine providers, the National Influenza Vaccine Summit has re-opened IVATS (Influenza Vaccine Availability Tracking System) on its web page. The information is available by clicking on “Looking for Influenza Vaccine for your Clinic” in the lower right corner of the webpage, or click here for a direct link to the PDF.

IVATS is a resource for physicians looking to purchase influenza vaccine and contains information from approved, enrolled and participating wholesale vaccine distributors or manufacturers of U.S. licensed influenza vaccine. Information on the site will be updated throughout the 2012–2013 influenza vaccination season.

Please share this resource with any providers in your jurisdiction who may have questions about where to purchase influenza vaccine for the current influenza season. For questions about IVATS, please contact Diane Peterson at the Immunization Action Coalition.

7. CNN “By the Numbers” Influenza Story

An interesting snapshot on the burden of influenza is available from CNN.

8. 2012-2013 Influenza Vaccine Information Statements Are Now Available

The influenza vaccine information statements have recently been updated. Both the TIV and LAIV VISs, as well as the TIV Large Print edition, have been updated, and RTF files also are available. All are dated 7/2/2012. These editions have been converted to the updated VIS format, but the text in both VISs is identical to that in last year’s influenza VISs. Note that there will be minor updates in the ACIP influenza recommendations, but these do not affect the VIS language.

9. Summit Website Offers Wonderful Resources on Influenza Vaccination!

Remember to visit the Summit web site for the latest on influenza immunization resources and to view archived copies of the weekly updates.