Reminder: Summit calls are scheduled weekly every Thursday at 3 p.m. ET, unless cancelled. The next Summit call is scheduled for January 31, 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 – 1/24/2013

Influenza Surveillance Update – Scott Epperson (CDC)

Scott reported that high levels of influenza activity continue to be seen across the country, with no dramatic changes occurring since last week’s update. Although it appears that some areas in the south may have peaked, morbidity continues to grow in the northeast and western regions. ILI visits remain above baseline levels throughout the country. As previously reported, the vast majority of specimens for influenza A H3 and all of those for 2009 H1N1 are similar to vaccine strains. Approximately 2/3 of influenza B specimens are similar to the vaccine. The proportion of deaths due to P&I rose sharply last week, with the majority of deaths occurring in persons >65 years of age. Persons in this age group also accounted for the highest number of influenza-associated hospitalizations, and the overwhelming majority of these individuals had underlying health conditions. Eight (8) new pediatric deaths were reported in Week 3, bringing the total to 37 so far this season. This is already higher than the number of pediatric deaths reported in the 2011–2012 season, providing another indication of the high levels of influenza being seen in the U.S. this year. Both CDC data and communications with representatives of the American College Health Association indicate there has been a significant surge in ILI on college campuses over the last 1–2 weeks.

Influenza Vaccine Supply – Erin Kennedy (CDC)

Erin provided an update on the vaccine supply survey conducted with NIVS partners. Both Erin and L.J thanked partners for their timely response to this request for information. The survey was conducted over 3 time periods; January 10–14, 14–16, and 16–18. Respondents included vaccine manufacturers and distributors, physicians, community immunizers, public health agencies, pharmacists, and other miscellaneous groups. However, pharmacies heavily weighted the information, accounting for 2/3 of the 493 responses received. More than 10.3 million doses were reported as being available, and that number is likely higher because few physicians/physician organizations submitted information. Overall, approximately 61% of respondents reported they had not depleted their vaccine supply, although that percentage steadily decreased throughout the 3 data collection periods. Among those who had depleted their inventory and attempted to order additional doses, most were successful during the initial period of the survey. However, by January 16–18, only 30% reported successfully obtaining vaccine.

Several key messages were developed from the survey information, including:
While some providers have exhausted their vaccine supply, others have not. Persons seeking vaccine may need to call several locations to find it, but it should be available.

Because sufficient vaccine is still available, at this time CDC is not issuing recommendations for prioritization of vaccine for certain groups.

Providers searching for vaccine should check the Influenza Vaccine Availability Tracking System (IVATS), and patients should be referred to the HealthMap Vaccine Finder.

Erin noted that last spring manufacturers estimated approximately 135 million doses of vaccine would be available this season. However, they have amended this with more recent production data, and almost 145 million doses are now anticipated to be available. CDC is also working with grantees to determine if any doses can be released from the VFC stockpile to help alleviate pediatric influenza vaccine shortages, but information on this issue is not yet available.

Other Items – Litjen Tan (IAC)

L.J reminded partners that the 2013 NAIS/NIVS Meeting will be held May 14–16 at the Hyatt Regency in Atlanta, Georgia. The meeting will begin early on May 14, so participants should plan to arrive on May 13. It will conclude at 2 p.m. on May 16. (Note: This is one hour earlier than previously announced.) The website for registration and additional information should be posted soon.

2. The CDC/Influenza Division Weekly Influenza Surveillance Report for week 3, 2013 (ending January 19, 2013) is available here. Of 11,984 specimens tested and reported by U.S. World Health Organization (WHO) and National Respiratory and Enteric Virus Surveillance System (NREVSS) collaborating laboratories in week 3, 3,129 (26.1%) were positive for influenza. The proportion of outpatient visits for influenza-like illness (ILI) was 4.3%, above the national baseline of 2.2%. All 10 regions reported ILI above region-specific baseline levels. Twenty-six (26) states and New York City experienced high ILI activity. Other states experienced moderate activity (14), low activity (9), and minimal activity (1). The District of Columbia had insufficient data. This site also includes maps of ILLNet 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 25, 2013 have been released. Archives of previous FluViews may be found here. A representative press story is available here.

3. Information from CDC

The 2012-2013 influenza season is turning out to be particularly severe for people aged 65 years and older. A web spotlight describes influenza activity and its effect on seniors. Health care professionals can find more information about treating this population in the Influenza Update for Geriatricians and Other Clinicians Caring for People 65 and Older.

4. Telebriefing on January 29, 2013 on Adult Vaccine Coverage in the United States

On January 29 CDC will host a telephone-only media briefing to provide up-to-date figures on the number of adults in the U.S. who receive recommended vaccines other than the influenza vaccine. Nearly a dozen vaccines — in addition to influenza — are recommended for people age 19 and older to protect adults from vaccine-preventable diseases including pneumococcal disease, whooping cough, and shingles. The details about this briefing are provided below.

WHO: Howard Koh, M.D., Assistant Secretary for Health, Department of Health and Human Services Carolyn Bridges, M.D., Associate Director for Adult Immunization, Immunization Services Division, Division, National Center for Immunization and Respiratory Diseases

WHEN: Tuesday, January 29, 2013 at Noon ET
5. New Adult Vaccine Locator has Soft Launch Today!

To coincide with the adult coverage telebriefing (see #4), the new Adult Vaccine Finder is now available! Please forward the following information to immunization providers with whom you work.

Attention Immunization Providers: If interested in letting the public know about vaccines offered at your practice or clinic, go to http://vaccine.healthmap.org. This site already includes more than 54,000 locations that provide influenza vaccine and has provided this information to 500,000 users from the general public.

On January 28, 2013, the site expands to include 10 additional adult vaccines. If you want to register your location on this website, click on the “about” button on the top right hand side and follow the prompts to register, or you may go directly to the site here.

Also available is a longer story for inclusion in newsletters, mailing lists, or to send to other immunization advocates. Please note that this is a “soft launch”; more promotion, including a press release targeted at media, will be available later this spring.

6. Visit the Families Fighting Flu Website!

Visit the Families Fighting Flu website to read 11-year old Madison’s story of her fight to survive influenza. Click here to subscribe to the Families Fighting Flu newsletter.

7. New England Journal of Medicine Publishes Perspective in Epidemic Influenza

This perspective, Epidemic Influenza – Responding to the Expected but Unpredictable, is written by CDC’s Joe Bresee and the University Of Virginia School Of Medicine’s Fred Hayden.

8. VIC Network Announces Influenza Webinar for January 30 at 2 p.m. Eastern

Whether you are managing communications about a bad influenza season or triaging media inquiries during a local disaster, having a strong working relationship between public health and communications departments and the collaboration of state and local community partners can help you maximize your ability to share information, build support and strengthen credibility.

Join the next VICNetwork webinar to learn about how partnerships developed with public and private, state and local organizations is a worthwhile investment that will help move your message. Representatives from Arizona will share examples from their work on promoting immunizations at the state and local level, along with their work on coordinating messages about the current influenza season. Additionally, Mr. Carlos Velázquez, Vice President of HMA Associates, in Washington, DC will speak about the CDC Flu Disparities Project, a project on grassroots social marketing to promote influenza immunization to disparate populations.

9. Children’s Hospitals and Clinics of Minnesota Holds “Influenza Prevention Public Service Announcement” Video Contest

On January 25 Children’s Hospitals and Clinics of Minnesota, along with Kohl’s Cares announced a call for entries for a influenza prevention public service announcement (PSA) video contest. Students at all Minnesota middle and high schools are encouraged to enter for a chance to win a portion of
$5,500 in prize money. Information about this contest has been mailed to all middle and high schools in Minnesota. To view more details about the contest, including complete rules, how to participate, and winning videos from previous years, please visit here.

10. JAMA Viewpoint: “Influenza Prevention Update: Examining Common Arguments Against Influenza Vaccination”

In this viewpoint, Thomas R. Talbot, MD, MPH, and H. Keipp Talbot, MD, MPH, from the Vanderbilt University School of Medicine say that, with influenza intensifying, it is important to review essential interventions that prevent influenza transmission at home, at work, and in healthcare facilities. They provide perspective to some of the reasons why people refuse the flu vaccination. A news story on this commentary also is available.

11. H1N1 Influenza Vaccination Unrelated to Fetal Mortality

According to research published in the New England Journal of Medicine, receiving the influenza A (H1N1) vaccination during pregnancy did not increase the risk for fetal mortality. The vaccine also reduced the mother’s risk for influenza during pregnancy and may have reduced the risk for influenza-related fetal death. An abstract describing this research is available here.

12. U.S. Researchers Tracking Influenza through Twitter!

Researchers and computer scientists at Johns Hopkins University have devised a way to track cases of influenza across the United States using Twitter. Dredze and his colleagues developed a screening method based on human language-processing technologies that only delivers real-time information on actual influenza cases and filters out the rest of the chatter on the public tweets in the United States.

13. Dr. Oz Weighs in on Influenza Vaccine

On the January 25 episode of his show, Dr. Oz asked a panel of infectious disease experts to weigh in on the flu shot. Unfortunately, one physician on the panel actually said it’s only good for those over 65 years old, and that she herself does not get vaccinated! Dr. Oz did say that while the vaccine is not as good as we want it to be, it is still the best prevention for influenza.

14. Fun Story on Treating Influenza with “Influenza Sorbet!”

Please note that this is a fun story that is circulating in the media. It is disappointing that there is no mention about real ways to prevent influenza, such as vaccination. An additional report on this story is available here.

15. New Intranasal Influenza Vaccine Targeted at the Pediatric Population Under Development

Eurocine Vaccines AB recently announced that their nasal seasonal influenza vaccine candidate Immunose™ FLU will focus on the pediatric market. Immunose™ FLU is composed of inactivated antigen formulated with the company’s proprietary adjuvant Endocine™. The vaccine is administered intranasally and has completed a Phase I/II clinical trial with excellent safety results.

16. 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 under “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.

17. 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.

18. Summit Website Offers Wonderful Resources on Influenza Vaccination!

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