



National Influenza Vaccine Summit

Influenza Activity Spotlights

Friday, January 20, 2012

Issue #11

Professional Medical Organizations
Please disseminate widely to all of your members.

1. Summary of the January 19, 2012 National Influenza Vaccine Summit Call

Post NIVW Update – Yvonne Garcia of CDC provided information highlighting activities from the recent National Influenza Vaccination Week (December 4–10, 2011.) This year’s events encouraged everyone 6 months and older to “*Get the flu vaccine, not the flu.*” In addition, the campaign focused on immunization of groups at higher risk of infection (or of spreading infection), including pregnant women, health care providers, persons ≥ 65 years of age, and parents of young children who might need a second dose of vaccine. A second key communication point emphasized that it is not too late to receive influenza vaccine, as we have not yet reached the time of the typical peak in disease spread. Early data collection from NIVW indicates the campaign achieved high visibility. The key media event was the December 5 media briefing with HHS Assistant Secretary of Health, Dr. Howard Koh and CDC NCIRD Director, Dr. Anne Schuchat. The briefing was attended by 37 representatives from national media outlets and 23 from non-profit organizations. Prior to NIVW CDC had begun recruiting new multi-sector partners. This paid off with the addition of 55 new partners who promoted influenza vaccination through activities such as posting information on their websites, linking to Flu Vaccine Finder, and advertising CDC’s Twitter Chat on December 8. The organizations amplified CDC’s messages to their constituents, resulting in 45 million visual media impressions. Additional activities during NIVW included a Twitter Chat with Dr. Lisa Grohskopf, CDC’s subject matter expert for the ACIP’s influenza working group, which received 14 million impressions, and online chats with senior CDC leaders for those interested in learning more about specific groups, such as persons dealing with chronic diseases. A key activity for the week included the biggest radio media tour in NIVW history, where more than 40 interviews were carried by 31 stations, and then shared with other stations for additional coverage. These interviews were estimated to have reached 118 million people. CDC feels this year’s campaign has helped them gain momentum in ways to use social media to capture interest in NIVW and support for influenza vaccination. Summit partners discussed whether this promotion could be correlated with increased immunization, but this will be difficult to prove. Some data will be available from questions included in the National Flu Survey. In addition, call participants suggested that CDC should consider adding pertinent questions to the real-time internet panel survey.

Surveillance Update – Scott Epperson from CDC provided an update on the current influenza season, which continues to be relatively quiet. There have been no pediatric deaths, hospitalizations and outpatient visits remain low, and there has been relatively low mortality attributed to pneumonia

and influenza. Reports from Canada and Europe also indicate a relatively quiet start to the season throughout the northern hemisphere. Call participants discussed that this should not be described as a “late” season; as indicated on this [graphic](#), February typically is the peak month for influenza activity in the United States. Laboratory samples tested to date are similar to the strains contained in this year’s vaccine, particularly for the type A strains. Approximately half of the type B samples tested have matched the vaccine. A total of 12 cases of H3N2v have been reported since July, but no new cases have been found since late November. Updated influenza reports may be accessed at the CDC influenza [website](#). Summit partners asked if additional information was available about a recent [report](#) questioning the effectiveness of oseltamivir. Additional information about the report is available in the general [media](#) and on [Medscape](#). CDC staff will be prepared to discuss this report on next week’s call.

National Adult Immunization Summit (NAIS) and National Influenza Vaccine Summit (NIVS) – LJ Tan provided a brief update on the upcoming Summits, scheduled for May 15-17 in Atlanta. These two meetings will be held back-to-back to allow attendance by many persons who are interested in both areas. Among the key individuals scheduled to speak are Dr. Howard Koh, Dr. Ann Schuchat, and the President of the American Medical Association. The goal of both meetings is to empower attendees with *action* steps for improving immunizations. Topics to be covered at the NAIS include quality measurements, financing issues, and leadership/advocacy. Discussions planned for the NIVS include the traditional review of the current season, 2012-2013 ACIP recommendations, and an update from the European Union, as well as award presentations for individual excellence. In addition, the meeting will explore effective communication techniques and support for grassroots leadership efforts. Registration information for both Summit events should be available on the web by the end of January.

- 2. The CDC/Influenza Division Weekly Influenza Surveillance Report** ending week 1, 2012 (ending January 7, 2012) is available [here](#). This site includes maps of the ILINet Activity Level and the [geographic spread](#) of influenza illness as reported by state and territorial epidemiologists. [Archives](#) of previous *FluViews* are available.

- 3. Eliza/Rand Corporation Report on Adult Immunization**

As first discussed during the NIVS call on January 5, Rand Corporation has just issued an important [report](#), “A Blueprint for Improving the Promotion and Delivery of Adult Vaccination in the United States.”

- 4. CDC Experts Reassured by Low Levels of Influenza Infection**

The low number of influenza cases reported to date in the United States is reassuring to public health experts. However, experts from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention are quick to point out that influenza could quickly become a more serious concern. Using the word “late” is not encouraged because influenza typically does not peak until February. Related stories are available at [Health.MSN.com](#) and [U.S. News and World Report](#). Additional discussion on this topic is available above in the summary for the January 19 NIVS call.

- 5. New Bird Flu Deaths, as Influenza Research Debate Continues**

Even as new cases of H5N1 infection are reported, on January 18 the journal *Science* released a set of [articles](#) which revisit December’s controversy over two laboratories that created strains of the virus that transmitted easily between ferrets, a mammal that responds to influenza much as people do. An additional story on this controversy is available in the [LA Times](#).

6. From the Cayman Islands: Influenza and Your Heart Condition

A [story](#) from the Cayman Islands indicates influenza season can start as early as October and last through May. As noted in the article, “Despite our warm sunny climate, the Cayman Islands is not immune to the flu virus or its complications. If you have a diagnosed heart condition, it is especially important to be aware that flu infections can create added stress in the body which can affect blood pressure, heart rate, and overall heart function.”

7. Texas Lags in Influenza Immunizations

Nationwide, influenza vaccination rates in children age 6 months through 17 years increased to 51% last season, a 7% increase from the previous season. In [Texas](#) the rate for this age group was 46%, barely 1% higher than the previous season and 5% below the national average.

8. Information on Swine Influenza/Variant Influenza Viruses

The latest information on swine influenza/variant influenza viruses is available on the CDC [website](#). Specific information on H3N2v influenza A viruses is available [here](#).

9. La Nina and Influenza Pandemics???

The La Nina phenomenon may increase the likelihood of influenza pandemics. Researchers recently found that the last four major influenza flu pandemics occurred after La Nina events, which bring colder water than normal to the surface off the Pacific coast of South America. Articles about this phenomenon are available in the [Vaccine News Daily](#) and the [Government Security News](#).

10. Summit Influenza Pocket Information Guide still available!

Every year the Summit collaborates with the Immunization Action Coalition to create and distribute the Influenza Pocket Information Guide. The 2011-2012 edition is still available for [order](#).

11. Summit Web site Offers Wonderful Resources on Influenza Vaccination!

Remember to visit the Summit [website](#) for the latest on influenza immunization resources, as well as archival copies of the weekly newsletters!