



# ***Influenza Activity Spotlight***

**2012–2013 Season**

**Issue #6 — November 5, 2012**

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**Reminder:** Summit calls are scheduled every Thursday at 3PM Eastern time, unless cancelled. The next Summit call is scheduled for November 8, 2012. Please email [L.J Tan](#) or [LaDora Woods](#) if you have any updates to provide to the Summit.

## **1. Summary of the National Influenza Vaccine Summit Call – 11/1/2012**

### **Opening Announcements – Carolyn Bridges (CDC)**

Carolyn announced that she would be facilitating today's call in the absence of L.J Tan, who is traveling.

### **Influenza Rapid Test *MMWR* – Daniel Jernigan (CDC)**

Daniel provided a summary of today's *MMWR* [article](#) evaluating commercially available rapid influenza diagnostic tests (RIDTs). These assays can detect antigen, but not subtypes. The ability to detect influenza in samples collected in an outpatient setting can be challenging; many tests have a specificity of <50%. Until this point, there has not been a common approach to compare the available RIDTs. As reported in the *MMWR*, CDC, BARDA, and the Medical College of Wisconsin collaborated in an evaluation of eleven RIDTs and their ability to detect 23 different circulating influenza viruses. This analysis allowed researchers to see how well each test detected virus stock with different concentrations. All RIDTs were able to detect virus at high concentrations, but there was a falloff in several tests' ability to detect virus as the concentrations were diluted.

The *MMWR* noted that the evaluation serves important objectives, including identification of best performers, providing a baseline for annual evaluation of RIDTs, and serving as a guide when new tests reach the marketplace. It also contributes to better sample collection practices. Training to improve sample collection technique is available on the Joint Commission [website](#). In addition, several instructional videos are available on [YouTube](#). A news article on this topic is available [here](#).

### **Influenza Surveillance Update – Scott Epperson (CDC)**

Scott reported that influenza activity remains quiet across the U.S. However, CDC is beginning to hear about scattered outbreaks. The majority of specimens found to be positive upon testing at CDC have been type A-H3N2 or type B. The proportion of type B samples has been higher than in previous years, but we have no way to know what this means for the current season. There has been one confirmed pediatric death this season due to influenza A. Influenza remains quiet in Canada and other parts of the world. Updated information will be available on *FluView*.

Call participants noted that communications about influenza vaccine recommendations continue to be confusing to the general public. Carolyn stated this will be a good point for discussion when Yvonne Garcia joins next week's call to discuss CDC's communication plans for the current season.

## ACIP Meeting Update – Lisa Grohskopf (CDC)

Lisa provided an update on the influenza discussions at last week's ACIP meeting. MedImmune, sanofi, and GSK all presented information on their progress in developing quadrivalent vaccine. This led to the only influenza-related vote of the meeting, which incorporated quadrivalent vaccine into the VFC language. This change was needed because the current VFC language discusses trivalent (TIV) vaccine. ACIP members also received a summary of current influenza epidemiology, an update on H3N2v, an overview of vaccine coverage during the 2011–2012 season, and an initial evaluation of LAIV versus TIV for healthy children

## Other Items – Carolyn Bridges (CDC)

Carolyn initiated a discussion about whether callers had heard of difficulties in obtaining or maintaining influenza vaccine due to Hurricane Sandy. One caller stated that losses appeared to have been minimized due to the advance notice they were able to give providers. However, an assessment of the situation is still ongoing.

Finally, Dr. Clem Lewin with Novartis provided a brief update about reports of holds on the release of *Agrippal*<sup>®</sup> and *Fluad*<sup>®</sup> vaccine in Europe and Canada. This was a precautionary hold due to protein aggregates found in one lot of vaccine which was never released in Italy. After further review of the data, holds were lifted on vaccine in Canada and Switzerland. Importantly, this never affected *Fluvirin*<sup>®</sup> vaccine in the United States, which is manufactured at a different facility. Novartis currently is reviewing whether there is a need to make a general statement about this for U.S. customers.

2. **The CDC/Influenza Division Weekly Influenza Surveillance Report** for week 41, 2012 (ending October 27, 2012) is available [here](#). This site also includes maps of ILINet State Activity level and the [geographic spread](#) of the 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 November 2, 2012 are available [here](#). [Archives](#) of previous *FluViews* also are available.

### 3. Information from CDC:

- The November 2, 2012 issue of the *MMWR* contains a new influenza [report](#), "Evaluation of 11 Commercially Available Rapid Influenza Diagnostic Tests — United States, 2011–2012".
- On October 30, 2012, the [article](#) "Prevalence of Seropositivity to Pandemic Influenza A/H1N1 Virus in the United States following the 2009 Pandemic" was published in the journal *PLOS One*.
- As of November 2, 2012, no additional H3N2v cases have been reported to CDC since those reported on Friday, September 28, 2012. Information about the recent H3N2v outbreaks is available [here](#).
- [National Influenza Vaccination Week \(NIVW\)](#) will be held December 2–8, 2012. Submit your NIVW activities to the calendar of events page [here](#).
- Updates have been made to the vaccination coverage section of CDC's [2012–2013 Seasonal Influenza Key Points](#).

### 4. Follow up on Novartis Vaccines

As was discussed during the Summit call (see Section 1 above), reports have been circulating about precautionary measures taken by various regulatory agencies in Europe and Canada regarding distribution of *Agrippal*<sup>®</sup> and *Fluad*<sup>®</sup>, Novartis seasonal influenza vaccines available in those regions. The measures taken by the Canadian and Swiss authorities have since been lifted. Stories on the Canadian lifting of these measures are available [here](#) and [here](#). It is important to point out that *Fluvirin*<sup>®</sup>, the Novartis influenza vaccine currently available in the United States for the 2012–2013 season, is **not** impacted by this issue, as it is manufactured at a different site.

**5. More coverage on Rhode Island's Mandate for Influenza Vaccination for All Healthcare Workers**

Rhode Island's influenza shot mandate for healthcare workers is the first of its kind in the nation. As reported in the [AMedNews](#), Rhode Island says the requirement is needed to protect the health of residents and prevent the spread of the illness to vulnerable populations.

**6. Minnesota *Star Tribune* Supports Osterholm Report**

The Minnesota *Star Tribune* has noted the low national reaction to Dr. Mike Osterholm's [report](#) and has published an [editorial](#) supporting the CIDRAP report.

**7. *New York Times* Article Highlights New Progress Toward Universal Influenza Vaccine**

A *New York Times* [article](#) suggests that a flurry of recent studies on the influenza virus has brought hope for a new influenza vaccine that may provide more long lasting universal protection. Influenza experts foresee a time when seasonal flu shots are a thing of the past, having been replaced by long-lasting vaccines.

**8. Mercy Regional Medical Center Mandates Influenza Vaccination for Its Workers after Colorado's New Rule**

In February 2012 the state of Colorado passed a rule with a 2014 implementation deadline requiring medical facilities to have 90 percent of their personnel vaccinated against influenza. As a result, [Mercy Regional Medical Center](#) has given employees until December 15 to receive influenza vaccine.

**9. New Publication Shows Employee Sponsored Immunization Program Works!**

A [study](#) presented on October 29, 2012 at the American Public Health Association annual meeting in San Francisco and recently published in the [Journal of Occupational and Environmental Medicine](#) found that influenza-like illness took a significant toll on employee health and productivity during a recent influenza season. A new employer-sponsored influenza immunization program that was developed for this study was effective at engaging both employees and families. (Note: This study was done by Cori Ofstead, a frequent participant in the Summit. Congratulations, Cori!)

**10. *USA Today* Coverage of ACIP Discussion on Efficacy of LAIV versus TIV in Children**

*USA Today* has published an [article](#) highlighting ACIP meeting discussions on the GRADE process as it pertains to the use of LAIV versus TIV in children. Greg Poland and Arnold Monto are quoted frequently.

**11. New Article Suggests Providing Free Vaccination to the Families of Vulnerable Infants and Children May Be Beneficial**

Free vaccine programs for families of infants and high-risk children are not widely used, but may offer an effective approach to protecting them from influenza and pertussis, according to an [article](#) published in the November issue of the American Journal of Infection Control. A news story on this subject is available [here](#).

**12. CDC Releases a Report on Its Worldwide Efforts on Influenza**

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention has released an annual [report](#) profiling a variety of CDC influenza-related projects from around the world, including epidemiology training, vaccine effectiveness studies, and influenza surveillance. A CIDRAP [story](#) on this report also is available.

**13. Two Research Articles Highlight Importance of Influenza Immunization for People at High Risk for Heart Disease**

In two separate studies presented at the Canadian Cardiovascular Congress, researchers say influenza vaccine may reduce the risk of heart related disease and death by up to 50%. Information on these reports is available from [CNN](#) and the [American Academy of Physician Assistants](#).

**14. 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. RTF files are also available. All VIS 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 years' influenza VISs. Note that there will be minor updates in the ACIP influenza recommendations, but these do not affect the VIS language.

**15. Summit Website Offers Wonderful Resources on Influenza Vaccination!**

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