



Influenza Activity Spotlight

2012–2013 Season

Issue #7 — November 19, 2012

Reminder: Summit calls are scheduled every Thursday at 3PM Eastern time, unless cancelled. The call scheduled for November 22 is cancelled due to the Thanksgiving holiday. The next Summit call is scheduled for November 29, 2012.

1. Summary of the National Influenza Vaccine Summit Call – 11/8/2012

Opening Announcements – L.J Tan (AMA)

L.J opened the weekly call by welcoming participants and reminding them that anyone wishing to present information to the group during a future call should contact [L.J Tan](#) or [LaDora Woods](#).

Influenza Surveillance Update – Scott Epperson (CDC)

Scott reported that influenza activity remains fairly low. No major signs of increase have been noted on national surveillance systems. However, sporadic outbreaks are beginning to be seen in the United States. To date, influenza A (H3N2) and B have been the predominant strains tested, but it is too early to say if this foreshadows the rest of the season. Positive tests for A (H3N2) have been similar to the strain found in the vaccine, while approximately two-thirds of type B tests have been similar to the vaccine. No new cases of H3N2v have been reported since the most recent onset on September 7.

2012 National Influenza Vaccination Week – Yvonne Garcia (CDC)

Yvonne provided an update on activities planned for the upcoming National Influenza Vaccination Week (NIVW) on December 2–8. The week will kick-off with a national media teleconference. Final details on this event are not yet available, but it will include the release of mid-season influenza coverage data. Subject matter experts will provide a 2-day national media tour, targeting 25 markets that historically have had the lowest influenza vaccine coverage rates. Although many partners will be joining participating in this year's campaign, Yvonne highlighted the participation of the National Football League (NFL). This year several retired NFL players, including Dan Marino, Joe Namath, Barry Sanders, James Lofton, William "Willie" Brown, and Carl Eller, will be tweeting messages about the importance of influenza vaccination. In addition, a mobile messaging campaign will be used to reach physicians with targeted messages about the importance of vaccination for persons at highest risk for influenza complications. Media tours also are planned which will highlight vaccination of ethnic groups such as Hispanics, African Americans, and American Indians/Alaska Natives. Additional NIVW outreach will include blog events, release of new public service announcements, and a live Twitter Chat to be held on Wednesday, December 5 from 1–2 p.m. ET. NIVS partners are encouraged to list their planned outreach events by entering them in CDC's online [calendar](#). CDC will provide additional information about NIVW activities on future Summit calls.

Other Items – L.J Tan (AMA)

Diane Peterson with the Immunization Action Coalition (IAC) provided an update on current influenza activities. IAC is preparing to re-release the Influenza Vaccine Availability Tracking System (IVATS) to consolidate information about influenza vaccine available for order. This information will be available on the Summit [website](#). IVATS was initially established during the 2009 H1N1 vaccine shortage, but IAC withdrew the application last year when influenza vaccine became more readily available. CDC has requested re-implementation of this website due to the possibility of vaccine shortages resulting from Hurricane Sandy. IAC plans to have the new IVATS site available within the next few days.

Diane also reminded call participants about the free Summit Pocket Guides available for providers. Influenza and pneumococcal vaccine pocket guides have been distributed for several years, and guides on Tdap and shingles are now available. All guides have been reviewed by CDC experts. These educational materials may be ordered at no cost through bulk [order](#) (minimum of 100) for distribution to health professionals.

Finally, Diane announced that the NYC Department of Health is seeking a donation of 1,000 doses of Tdap to replace vaccine lost in Hurricane Sandy. Any organization willing to assist in this effort should contact [Jane Zucker](#) at the NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene.

2. Summary of the National Influenza Vaccine Summit Call – 11/15/2012

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 Surveillance Update – Scott Epperson (CDC)

Scott reported that influenza activity remains fairly low, though it appears to be increasing in the southeast and south central regions of the country. Influenza A(H3N2) and B remain the predominant strains tested, with smaller numbers of influenza A(H1N1). All influenza A strains tested have been similar to the strains found in this season's vaccine, but only two-thirds of influenza B specimens tested have been similar to the vaccine strain. P&I mortality and outpatient visits remain below baseline levels. Only one laboratory-confirmed pediatric death has been reported to date. Due to the Thanksgiving holiday, the surveillance report next week will be issued on Wednesday afternoon rather than Friday.

***Fighting the Flu Happens at School* – Nichole Bobo (NASN)**

Nicole provided an overview of the *Fighting Flu Happens at School* educational awareness campaign sponsored by the National Association of School Nurses (NASN). This program, which has been developed over the course of the last three years, was piloted in 5 school districts during the 2011–2012 influenza season. Campaign materials include suggested month-by-month activities, sample articles for newsletters, and resources from national sites such as CDC, NFID, and CHOP. The hard copy materials are perforated to assist in posting. Information about *Fighting the Flu Happens at School* can be [downloaded](#), or a limited number of hard copy materials may be requested by contacting [Nicole Bobo](#). As part of this campaign, CDC and NASN will conduct a blogger briefing on Tuesday, December 4 at 11 a.m. EDT. The focus of the session will be to stress the importance of targeting schools for influenza vaccine delivery. Interested persons should contact Nicole for additional information.

Prescribe Wellness' A Million More Campaign – Al Babbington (Prescribe Wellness)

Prescribe Wellness is sponsoring *A Million More* campaign, an effort to recruit 1,000 pharmacies across the country to be the center of preventative healthcare in the community; offer immunizations, screening, and other cognitive services; and help recruit 1,000 patients each quarter to take responsibility for their own health. The pharmacies are intended to be "foot soldiers" reaching out into

the community to help increase influenza immunization. The campaign is partnering with 14 state pharmacy associations.

Currently, 714 pharmacies have signed up to participate in the program, but it is hoped the goal of 1,000 will be reached during the 2nd quarter. Both traditional and electronic technologies are being utilized to share information about the campaign. Over 6,500 television spots are being used in the top 15 markets with the goal of driving consumers to the campaign website. In particular, these messages are targeted to young adults who have not been immunized. A major objective of the campaign is to utilize digital technology to provide outreach to patients. Social media is also being utilized in this effort, including a Million Dollar Prize Giveaway for Facebook participants. School leaders also have been recruited to encourage participation. The program encourages collaboration with local partners such as health departments.

Pharmacies are charged a small fee to participate in the program, and the proceeds are used to support the campaign's materials and media outreach. In addition to the influenza program, *A Million More* supports outreach campaigns for healthy hearts, diabetic screenings, and all routinely recommended immunizations.

Influenza and Autism – Marshalyn Yeargin-Allsopp (CDC)

Marshalyn described the findings from a recent *Pediatrics* article, "Autism After Infection, Febrile Episodes, and Antibiotic Use during Pregnancy: An Exploratory Study," copy attached. Danish investigators reviewed this issue because animal studies suggested that maternal immune activation during pregnancy caused deficiencies in fetal neurodevelopment. The study sought to examine this concept by looking at specific infections.

The researchers examined a large, population-based cohort of children 8–14 years of age who were born in Denmark from 1997 to 2003. Telephone interviews were conducted with the mothers at 2 points during pregnancy and when the child was 6 months old. Self-reported information was collected on general infections (i.e., not specifically related to influenza), febrile episodes, and use of antibiotics. Diagnoses of autism spectrum disorder (ASD) and infantile autism were retrieved from the Danish Psychiatric Central Register.

The collected data indicated little evidence that various types of mild common infectious diseases or febrile episodes during pregnancy were associated with ASD/infantile autism. However, the data suggest that maternal influenza infection was associated with a twofold increased risk of infantile autism, prolonged episodes of fever caused a threefold increased risk of infantile autism, and use of various antibiotics during pregnancy were potential risk factors for ASD/infantile autism.

Marshalyn noted that the Danish findings were not directly generalizable to the United States because of diagnosis coding differences between the 2 countries. The strengths of the study include the large sample size and its prospective nature. However, with only 1% of the cohort being diagnosed with ASD, some conclusions could be the result of chance alone. In addition, the mother's history was self-reported and not laboratory confirmed. CDC currently is conducting a large study in the United States which includes the mother's infection history.

In conclusion, this was an exploratory study and more work will be needed to confirm the possible findings. Healthcare providers should not change their clinical practices based on these results. CDC continues to recommend that all pregnant women should be vaccinated against influenza and receive early antiviral treatment when indicated.

- 3. The CDC/Influenza Division Weekly Influenza Surveillance Report** for week 45, 2012 (ending November 10, 2012) is available [here](#). (The report from week 44, 2012 also is [available](#).) This site also includes maps of ILINet State activity level 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 November 9, 2012 are available [here](#). Archives of previous *FluViews* may be found [here](#).

4. Information from the CDC

- **CDC iPad App for Clinicians Now Available on the Apple App Store** – The [CDC Influenza application](#) for clinicians and other health care professionals makes it easier than ever to find CDC's latest recommendations and influenza activity updates on your iPad. When your device is connected, the content is updated automatically, so you always have the most up-to-date information. You can personalize your experience with features like highlighting, annotations, and bookmarks to suit your own needs. Share the content with others through social media such as Facebook and Twitter.

Check out these features:

- View updated information on national flu activity.
- Find influenza vaccination recommendations endorsed by CDC and the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP).
- Obtain information on diagnosis and treatment of influenza, including antiviral treatment recommendations by CDC and the ACIP.
- Obtain information on laboratory testing for influenza.
- Find CDC recommendations on influenza infection control.
- View videos of CDC subject matter experts discussing influenza topics.
- Order official CDC designed print products for posting in the workplace or distributing to patients.

For more information please visit [Information for Health Professionals](#).

CDC is also interested in feedback from users, as it plans to continue to improve the app in future releases. Anyone with feedback is encouraged to write [Doug Jordan](#).

- On November 8, the CDC Influenza Division offered a [response](#) to the New York Times column, "Reassessing Flu Shots as the Season Draws Near."
- As of November 9, 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 Dec. 2-8, 2012. Related updates are available [here](#). Submit your NIVW activities to the [calendar of events page](#).

5. 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 under "Looking for Influenza Vaccine for Your Clinic." Click on "Looking for Influenza Vaccine for your Clinic?" found 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 US 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.

6. Families Fighting Flu Will Hold an Educational Webinar on November 29 at 12 p.m. EDT

Moms are so busy, though during flu season, taking the time to protect yourself and your family from this highly-contagious and serious disease can be life-saving.

As a mom or mom-to-be, it's important to stay informed and to always be prepared. To help, Families Fighting Flu (FFF) invites you to join an educational webinar to learn about protection from influenza for pregnant women, new moms, including those who are breastfeeding, and young children. Dr. Kevin Ault, Professor, Department of Gynecology and Obstetrics at Emory University School of Medicine, will be discussing what moms and moms-to-be should know and do to keep themselves and their families healthy during flu season. Julie Moise, a parent and FFF board member, will also share her personal story about her infant's battle with influenza and her involvement with FFF.

Join the [webinar](#) to become better informed and find out how you can get involved to help raise awareness in your community about the importance of flu vaccination – the single, best preventative measure a mom can take each and every year!

7. Childhood Influenza Immunization Coalition (CIIC) Releases Five-Year Report

CIIC has issued a new [report](#) marking five years since its creation in 2007. While pediatric influenza rates have steadily increased during the past few years, extending protection annually to nearly half of the nation's children, there is still much work to be done. "Improving Childhood Influenza Immunization: A Five Year Progress Report," highlights the positive advances in pediatric influenza immunization and outlines future challenges for the immunization community to address.

8. Time Coverage of Influenza Infection During Pregnancy and Increased Risk of Autism Says Expectant Moms Have Another Reason to Seek Influenza Vaccination

An [article](#) in *Time* suggests that expectant moms may have one more reason to get a flu shot. The article states that, "According to the latest research on flu vaccination during pregnancy, following current recommendations for influenza shots may help to lower rates of autism."

9. FDA's VRBPAC Endorses the Safety and Immunogenicity of an Adjuvant-Containing H5N1 Influenza Vaccine

A government advisory committee yesterday [endorsed](#) the safety and immunogenicity of an adjuvant-containing H5N1 influenza vaccine proposed for inclusion in the US pandemic emergency stockpile, signaling that it could become the first adjuvanted flu vaccine to win approval in the United States.. A press release from GSK is available [here](#).

10. Interesting Basic Science Publication Proposes that Influenza Adversely Affects Toll-Like Receptor 7 (TLR7), Resulting in Increased Susceptibility to Bacterial Infection

When infected with influenza, the body becomes an easy target for bacteria. The influenza virus alters the host's immune system and compromises its capacity to effectively fight off bacterial infections. Now, a team of immunologists at the Helmholtz Centre for Infection Research (HZI) and cooperation partners has discovered that an immune system molecule called TLR7 is partly to blame. The molecule recognizes the viral genome, and then signals scavenger cells of the immune system to ingest fewer bacteria. The researchers published their [findings](#) in the *Journal of Innate Immunity*. Abstracts are available [here](#) and [here](#).

11. British Medical Journal Establishes Website Seeking Clinical Data on Efficacy of Tamiflu

Last week the [British Medical Journal](#), as part of its ongoing open data campaign, launched a dedicated website aimed at persuading Roche to give doctors and patients access to the full data on oseltamivir (Tamiflu).

12. Story from San Francisco on Using the Web to Help Track Influenza Outbreaks

Public health experts know the secret to effective, proactive disease surveillance is getting clues of an impending outbreak before it can spread far and wide. To that end, their official surveillance tools have improved dramatically in recent years. But to gain an additional edge, they also are looking to the Internet, and social media in particular, as a possible warning system from the front lines. More information may be found [here](#).

13. Healthcare Workers Vulnerable to H5N1 Influenza.

A new [report](#) from India suggests that after poultry farm workers, healthcare professionals are considered the most vulnerable to being infected by H5N1 avian influenza.

14. Parkland Hospital issues release on its inclusion on the IAC Honor Roll for Patient Safety

Just last year, Parkland Health and Hospital System was placed on the federal government's equivalent of scholastic probation for patient safety problems. Now, the hospital has been named to the Immunization Action Coalition's [Honor Roll](#), which recognizes health care organizations that have taken the lead in requiring influenza vaccinations in health care settings.

15. 2012-2013 Influenza Vaccine Information Statements Are Now Available

The [influenza vaccine information statements](#) have recently been updated and are now available. Both the TIV and LAIV VISs, and the TIV Large Print edition, have been updated. RTF files are also 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.

16. 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!