



Influenza Activity Spotlight

2012–2013 Season

Issue #24 — July 25, 2013

Reminder: Summit calls routinely are scheduled weekly every Thursday at 3 p.m. ET, unless cancelled. The Summit anticipates that these conference calls will return to this regular weekly schedule as vaccine begins to be released by the FDA and distributed into the market. Please email [L.J Tan](#) or [LaDora Woods](#) if you have any updates on activities to provide to the Summit.

1. National Influenza Vaccine Summit Call

The Summit call scheduled for July 25 was cancelled.

2. The CDC/Influenza Division Weekly Influenza Surveillance Report for week 28 (ending July 13, 2013) is available [here](#). As part of summer reporting, an abbreviated version of *FluView* will be available each week. According to the final full *FluView* for 2012–2013 season, U.S. influenza activity is at summertime levels in most of the country. However, sporadic activity can occur year-round, and vaccination is still recommended for institutional outbreak control; children needing their second dose; and some travelers going to the Southern Hemisphere, which will soon enter its influenza season. Compared to most previous seasons for which surveillance data are available, the [2012–2013 influenza season](#) started about 4 weeks early and was intense. An [Influenza Summary Update](#) of the influenza activity reported by state and territorial epidemiologists, which indicates geographic spread of influenza viruses but does not measure the intensity of influenza activity, is available. Archives of previous *FluViews* are available [here](#).

3. Novel Influenza H3N2v Activity

No new human infections with influenza A (H3N2) variant (H3N2v) virus were reported to CDC during week 28. A total of 12 H3N2v cases have been reported this summer. No hospitalizations or deaths have occurred. At this time no ongoing human-to-human transmission has been identified. Public health and agriculture officials are investigating the extent of disease among humans and swine, and additional cases may be identified as the investigation continues.

Because of reporting schedules, state totals posted by CDC may not always be consistent with those reported by state health departments. If there is a discrepancy between state and CDC case counts, data from the state health department should be used as the most accurate number.

Early identification and investigation of human infections with novel influenza A viruses is critical in order to evaluate the extent of the outbreak and possible human-to-human transmission. Additional information on influenza in swine, variant influenza infection in humans, and strategies to interact safely with livestock can be found [here](#).

CDC's June 28th, 2013 key points regarding recent human infections with influenza H3N2 variant (H3N2v) virus infections in the United States were distributed in the previous eUpdate.

4. More Information from CDC

On June 20 CDC issued a [Health Alert Network \(HAN\) Advisory #351](#) regarding H3N2v. (Note: This supersedes the H3N2v-related [HAN Health Advisory #325](#), which was issued August 3, 2012.

The recommendations (*including hyperlinks*) from the new HAN Advisory are shown below:

Recommendations for Health Care Providers and Public Health Practitioners

- Clinicians who suspect influenza in persons with recent exposure to swine should obtain a nasopharyngeal swab or aspirate from the patient, place the swab or aspirate in viral transport medium, and contact their state or local health department to arrange transport and request a timely diagnosis at a state public health laboratory.
- Commercially available rapid influenza diagnostic tests (RIDTs) may not detect H3N2v virus in respiratory specimens. Therefore, a negative rapid influenza diagnostic test result does not exclude infection with H3N2v or any influenza virus. In addition, a positive test result for influenza A cannot confirm H3N2v virus infection, because these tests cannot distinguish between influenza A virus subtypes (i.e., they do not differentiate between other human influenza A viruses and H3N2v virus). Therefore, respiratory specimens should be collected and sent for sub-type specific real-time polymerase chain reaction (RT-PCR) testing at a state public health laboratory.
- Enhanced surveillance for influenza during agricultural fair season is recommended to facilitate timely detection and investigation of H3N2v cases. Recommendations for influenza surveillance and testing can be found [here](#).
- Clinicians should consider antiviral treatment with oral oseltamivir or inhaled zanamivir in patients with suspected or confirmed H3N2v virus infection. Antiviral treatment is most effective when started as soon as possible after influenza illness onset. For more information on antiviral treatment for H3N2v virus infections, please look [here](#).

Recommendations for the Public

- Persons who are at high risk for influenza complications² should avoid exposure to pigs and swine barns at fairs this year.
- Persons engaging in activities that may involve swine contact at fairs should wash their hands frequently with soap and running water before and after exposure to animals; avoid eating or drinking in animal areas; and avoid close contact with animals that look or act ill. For additional information, please see the [factsheet](#).
- Patients with influenza-like illness who are at high risk for influenza complications² should see their health care provider promptly to determine if treatment with antiviral medications is warranted.
- Patients who experience influenza-like symptoms following direct or close contact with pigs and who seek medical care should inform their health care provider about the exposure.
- Influenza viruses have not been shown to be transmissible to people through eating properly handled and prepared pork or other products derived from pigs. For more information about the proper handling and preparation of pork, visit the USDA website fact sheet "[Fresh Pork from Farm to Table](#)".

For more information:

- [Interim Guidance on Case Definitions to be Used for Investigations of Influenza A \(H3N2\) Variant Virus Cases](#) (for state and local health departments)
- [Strategies for Seasonal and Influenza A\(H3N2\)v in Health Care Settings](#)

- [Interim Guidance on Specimen Collection, Processing and Testing for Patients with Suspected Influenza A \(H3N2\) Variant Virus Infection](#) (for public health professionals)
- [Interim Guidance for Enhanced Influenza Surveillance: Additional Specimen Collection for Detection of Influenza A \(H3N2\) Variant Infections](#) (for state and local health departments)
- [Measures to Minimize Influenza Transmission at Swine Exhibitions, 2013](#)
- [Compendium of Measures to Prevent Disease Associated with Animals in Public Settings, 2011](#)

¹ Influenza viruses that circulate in swine are called swine influenza viruses when isolated from swine, but are called variant viruses when isolated from humans.

² This includes persons with certain underlying chronic medical conditions such as asthma, diabetes, heart disease, or neurological conditions, pregnant women, and persons younger than 5 years, older than 65 years of age, or who have weakened immune systems. For additional information on persons at increased risk for influenza complications, please see [here](#).

5. Update on NAIS Working Groups

National Adult and Influenza Immunization Summit (NAIS) workgroup co-leads have received a document outlining the priority areas for next year as suggested by Summit attendees and from feedback received after the meeting. Key themes expressed include:

- addressing disparities, including how to decrease costs for uninsured adults;
- developing stronger and unified communication messages;
- reducing in-network barriers to receipt of immunizations;
- improving information sharing between providers through use of tools such as immunization registries;
- developing plans for quality measures;
- informing providers about the implications of the Affordable Care Act; and
- identifying best practices and business tools.

A report documenting each workgroup's priorities and plans will be shared as soon as it is finalized. However, these should align closely with the themes outlined above. Some, but not all, of the workgroups have begun meeting for this year. Persons interested in joining a particular workgroup should contact [LaDora Woods](#).

6. Sanofi Pasteur Announces Release of First Lots of 2013-2014 Seasonal Influenza Vaccine

On July 25, Sanofi Pasteur [announced](#) that the first lots of Fluzone® (Influenza Virus Vaccine) for the 2013–2014 season have been released by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) for U.S. distribution, and these were shipped July 24. The company plans to deliver more than 60 million doses of seasonal influenza vaccine this fall, consistent with estimates provided at the May 2013 National Adult and Influenza Immunization Summit. Additional information is available [here](#).

On June 7, Sanofi also received licensure for its Fluzone® Quadrivalent vaccine.

7. NVAC Urges Retention of the IMM-1 Pneumococcal Measure in the CMS Hospital Inpatient Quality Reporting (IQR) Program

CMS' proposal to remove the IMM-1 pneumococcal vaccine quality measure received significant discussion at the annual Summit meeting in May. NVAC considered this issue during its June face-to-face meeting, exercised due diligence, and met again via a public conference call to take a vote on

the issue. NVAC voted to recommend that the Assistant Secretary of Health work with CMS to **retain** the IMM-1 pneumococcal measure in the CMS IQR program.

8. Update on NVAC Revision to the Adult Immunization Standards

A NVAC subcommittee has just completed review of this document, which was developed by the NAHS' Access and Collaboration Workgroup. It will be published in the Federal Register in time to receive public comments before NVAC's September meeting, where a vote will likely occur. The *Standards* were last updated in 2003. This new update acknowledges that the number and type of providers have expanded greatly beyond traditional physicians during the last 10 years. For example, many adults may receive care from specialists or at non-traditional locations such as pharmacies. The goal of the new *Standards* is to promote the concept that all providers should feel a fundamental obligation to assess their patients and either give immunizations or provide appropriate recommendations and referral. Following NVAC adoption, the *Standards* will serve as an official recommendation that can be leveraged in terms of system changes and other areas, to improve adult immunization coverage levels.

9. Physician Fee Schedule - Proposed Rule for CY2014

The [Physician Fee Schedule proposed rule for 2014](#) (note: this is a very large document) was released by CMS on July 8, 2013. The proposed rule addresses several immunization measures for inclusion in the Physician Quality Reporting System (PQRS).

Of interest, CMS proposes including IMM-1c related to pneumococcal immunization in the PQRS in 2014. The IMM-1 pneumococcal immunization measure has 3 parts: IMM-1a discusses overall rates, IMM-1b is for ages 65 and older, and IMM 1-c is for high risk patients age 5-64 years. The proposal includes a description of the measure and CMS' rationale for including it, i.e., the need to align measures across CMS reporting programs and that IMM-1 is included in the hospital in-patient hospital inpatient quality reporting (IQR) system. Note that this is in conflict with the action that CMS took several months ago via its proposed rule to remove IMM-1 from the IQR set (see item 7 above).

10. Medicaid Expansion States to Cover ACIP-Recommended Vaccines under ACA

On Friday, July 5, 2013, CMS released the final Medicaid EHB [rule](#). CMS clarifies that Medicaid Alternative Benefit Plans (ABPs) for the expansion population must cover the full range of preventive services required in the Essential Health Benefits (EHB) package, including ACIP-recommended vaccines, with no cost-sharing. The relevant discussion begins on page 237 of the rule and also is shown below. This is great news for vaccines!

Preventive Services as an EHB

The EHB Final rule specified that, to provide EHB, a plan must provide coverage of preventive services. This requires plans to cover a broad range of preventive services including "A" or "B" services recommended by the United States Preventive Services Task Force; Advisory Committee for Immunization Practices recommended vaccines; preventive care and screening of infants, children and adults recommend by HRSA's Bright Futures program, and additional preventive services for women recommended by the Institute of Medicine. We proposed that Title XIX premium and cost sharing provisions apply to preventive services for adults, but not for children.

Comment: Many commenters commended HHS for including in ABPs the full range of preventive services required in the EHB, including all of the services specified in section 2713 of the PHS Act. The commenters believed this is a critical provision for vulnerable populations and will help achieve the Affordable Care Act objective of shifting health care emphasis from expensive interventions to cost-effective prevention. The commenters requested that HHS explicitly state this requirement (currently in the preamble at 78 FR 4631) in the regulation itself.

Response: The language in the preamble to the proposed rule, originating in section 2713 of the PHS Act, was included as a reference to the requirement to cover preventive services as part of providing EHB, which has been implemented by regulation codified at 45 CFR 147.130. We do not believe this requires further clarification in this final rule.

Comment: A number of commenters asked CMS to clarify its preamble language, "Title XIX premium and cost sharing provisions apply to preventive services." Specifically, CMS should clarify whether it intends this to apply to the ABPs for the new expansion population and/or to current state Medicaid plan services.

Response: We agree that this issue needs to be clarified, particularly in light of the issuance of the final rules implementing EHB requirements for the individual and small group markets. In the final regulations issued February 25, 2013 at 78 FR 12835, the provision of EHB was defined at 45 CFR 156.115(a)(4) to "include preventive health services described in [45 CFR] §147.130". That cross referenced provision describes the requirement for coverage of preventive services without cost sharing. As explained in the preamble to the proposed regulations, at 77 FR 70644, 70651 (Nov. 26, 2012), the intent was to include in the EHB coverage obligation the prohibition on cost sharing for preventive health services. Thus, while Medicaid cost sharing provisions at sections 1916 and 1916A of the Act apply generally to preventive services provided in ABPs, cost sharing may not be applied to preventive services that are within the definition of EHBs (described in 45 CFR 147.130). An ABP may include preventive services beyond the floor of coverage required as EHBs, and cost sharing may be applied to such preventive services at state option to the extent permissible under sections 1916 and 1916A of the Act.

11. **Adult and Influenza Immunization Related Media Reports** (focus on July 24 - 25)

Adult Vaccines

[Vaccines: Not Just for Children, Adults Need Them, Too](#) (Philly.com)

Vaccine programs for children have been extremely successful against many diseases, including measles, rubella, tetanus, diphtheria, and polio. In fact, fewer than 500 children die each year in the United States (US) from diseases that can be prevented ...

[Does the HPV Vaccine Work?](#) (Care2.com)

In an article last year, we said it was still too soon to tell whether Gardasil, a vaccine that protects against 4 common strains of HPV (human papillomavirus), would make a difference in HPV rates on a large scale. Just a year later, a new study has ...

[HPV Triples Risk of Developing Esophageal Cancer](#) (Counsel & Heal)

Human papillomavirus (HPV), the most common sexually transmitted infection, may triple the risk of esophageal cancer, a new study suggests. HPV has been linked to cervical and genital cancers, and more recently to some head and neck cancers. "One of ...

[HPV Vaccine Effective Against Oral Infections](#) (Doctors Lounge)

The researchers found that the oral prevalence of identifiable mucosal HPV was relatively low (1.7 percent). At the four-year mark there were 15 prevalent HPV16/18 infections in the control group and one in the vaccine group (VE, 93.3 percent). For ...

[Polio to Cure Cancer](#) (KOAA.com Colorado Springs and Pueblo News)

That's when a doctor suggested killing her cancer cells - with polio. Her family was skeptical - but it worked! The doctor and his team had engineered a version of polio that wasn't lethal. Shortly after injecting polio in her brain tumor - doctors ...

[Mercury and Autism Not Linked. Again.](#) (Forbes)

A “sentinel” population in the vastness of the Indian Ocean has long attracted scientific interest because of how much dietary methylmercury its members consume. The thing is, though, that as much as scientists have looked, they have yet to find any ...

[EHRs Can Improve Immunization Data Reporting, Study Says](#) (iHealthBeat)

Electronic health record systems could help combat vaccine-preventable diseases by automating immunization data, according to a study published in the journal Applied Clinical Informatics, FierceEMR reports.

[Dept of Public Health Readies New Immunization-Messaging Portal](#) (California Healthline)

Next month, the California Department of Public Health plans to launch an immunization-messaging portal that could help health care providers qualify for meaningful use incentive payments, Healthcare Informatics reports.

[Before Birth Vaccine's Best](#) (Liverpool City Champion)

"Having the vaccine before the baby is born helps protect the most vulnerable baby from this potentially life threatening disease." The National Centre for Immunisation Research and Surveillance recently found that vaccinating mothers before the birth ...

[Health Officials Warn of Whooping Cough Outbreak](#) (WXYZ)

The Washtenaw County Health Department says it has seen an outbreak of pertussis this year. There have been 104 confirmed or probable cases of the highly contagious respiratory disease reported in the county. "That's about four times an ...

[Editorial: Take Steps to Prevent Whooping Cough Deaths](#) (Green Bay Press Gazette)

The Van Tornhouts of South Bend, Ind., lost their 1-month-old daughter to pertussis a week after her coughing began. The family, who told their story recently to a Press-Gazette Media reporter, now work with organizations to promote vaccinations ...

[Due to Upturn in Whooping Cough Cases, Booster Shot is Now Mandatory for ...](#) (KIWARadio.com)

Iowa students who will be starting seventh grade next month have to be vaccinated for whooping cough, or pertussis. Dr. Patty Quinlisk, the state's chief epidemiologist, says it's a new requirement this year. (As above) Dr. Quinlisk ...

[Brooklyn Measles Outbreak Ends](#) (Jewish Telegraphic Agency)

A measles outbreak in Brooklyn is over, the New York City Department of Health said. The department in its announcement on Monday thanked the Jewish communal leaders for helping stem the outbreak. From March to June, 58 cases ...

[Measles is back. It had help](#) (Globe and Mail)

Measles was supposedly stamped out years ago, along with whooping cough, polio and other nasty maladies. But now it's made a comeback, thanks to people who don't believe in vaccinations. France, northern England and Wales have all been hit with ...

[Measles Outbreaks are on the Rise in the U.S.](#) (Smithsonian–blog)

Prior to the release of the measles vaccine in 1963, hundreds of thousands of people in the U.S. contracted the potentially deadly respiratory illness each year. Since the mid-1990s, cases have declined sharply, with just 37 incidences of the viral ...

[Vaccinating Boys Plays Key Role in HPV Prevention](#) (RedOrbit)

Improving vaccination rates against the human papillomavirus (HPV) in boys aged 11 to 21 is key to protecting both men and women, says new research from University of Toronto Professor Peter A. Newman from the Factor-Inwentash Faculty of Social Work.

Influenza

[Swine Flu Claims One More Life](#) (Times of India)

PUNE: A 59-year-old woman from Dhayari Gaarmal died of swine flu at a city hospital late on Tuesday evening. This takes the city's H1N1 death toll to 25 so far this year. Nine people with the infection are currently being treated at different hospitals ...

[H1N1 Influenza has Claimed the Lives of 38 People in Argentina](#) (MercoPress)

The H1N1 Influenza A virus has claimed the lives of 38 people so far this year in Argentina, a regional health official said this week, following the confirmation of two more deaths in the western province of San Juan. Comment. So far all victims have ...

[Ohio State Fair Officials Look to Minimize Swine Flu Threat](#) (ThisWeekNews)

Responding to an outbreak of swine flu in Indiana, local health officials are asking Ohio State Fair patrons to protect themselves from the disease. Those who visit animal barns are being advised to take a number of precautions, such as washing hands ...

[Israeli Researchers Discover New Ways to Combat the Flu](#) (ShalomLife)

The body's immune system possesses a number of 'natural killers' (NK) that are used to identify the influenza-virus and respond accordingly, working to stop its spread. If these NK cells were perfect, then the body would become sick with the flu. Given ...

[H7N9 Avian Flu Outbreak Eases: Could Return in the Fall with Human-to ...](#) (BioNews Texas)

"H7N9 Influenza Viruses Are Transmissible in Ferrets by Respiratory Droplet" (Science DOI: 10.1126/science.1240532), was conducted and co-written by teams of scientists led by Dr. Hualan Chen, corresponding author, at the Harbin Veterinary Research ...

[Joint Study Sheds New Light on the Cause of Pandemic Influenza](#) (PR Web—press release)

With the use of sophisticated mathematical modelling techniques, a mathematician at The Hong Kong Polytechnic University (PolyU) and his co-researchers have completed a study that explains the phenomenon of multiple waves of influenza pandemic in ...

[Death Toll from H1N1 in Argentina Reaches 38](#) (Bemama)

The H1N1 Influenza A virus has claimed the lives of 38 people so far this year in Argentina, a regional health official said Tuesday following two more deaths in the western province of San Juan.

12. Don't Forget to Update and Submit to the New Adult Vaccine Locator!

The new Adult Vaccine Finder is now available! Please forward the following information to immunization providers with whom you work!

Attention Immunization Providers: If you are 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 flu shots and has provided this information to 500,000 users from the general public. On January 28, 2013, the site expanded 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 go to <https://flushot.healthmap.org/admin/signup>.

13. 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..