



National Adult and Influenza Immunization Summit

Influenza Activity Spotlight

2013–2014 Season

Issue #11 — November 4, 2013

Reminder: Summit calls are scheduled every Thursday at 3 p.m. ET, unless cancelled. Thank you for your continued participation. Please email [L.J Tan](#) or [LaDora Woods](#) if you have any updates on activities to provide to the Summit.

1. National Adult and Influenza Immunization Summit Call – October 31, 2013

Influenza Surveillance Update – Scott Epperson, CDC

Scott reported that local influenza activity appears to be picking up. While there are numerous reports of local activity from local media, Scott mentioned that this local activity may not necessarily reflect in the national surveillance system.

The majority of influenza specimens currently being tested are 2009 H1N1. However, Scott emphasized that the number of positive samples is low. Mortality surveillance remains below epidemic thresholds, and reports of P&I related mortality also are at low levels. No pediatric deaths have been reported for the current (2013–2014 season, but CDC continues to receive reports of pediatric deaths from the previous season, bringing that total to 167. Outpatient data from the ILINet indicates only 1.2% of visits are for ILI. This level has remained steady over past the few weeks and is well below the baseline of 2.2%. All 10 HHS regions are below region specific baseline levels. Most states are reporting no or sporadic activity. Three states (MS, LA, and TX) are reporting local activity. Scott explained that states will tend to bounce back and forth between local and sporadic activity until the season becomes more pronounced. Puerto Rico is showing more tropical seasonality, reporting regional activity with a substantial level of hospitalizations and ILI cases.

Few specimens have been available for characterization and antiviral testing. As the season progresses, additional samples will be available to provide more definitive results. All 3 of the specimens characterized to date have been 2009 H1N1 type A, and all specimens tested have been susceptible to oseltamivir and zanamivir.

Announcements – L.J Tan, IAC

L.J reminded participants that the [Influenza Vaccine Availability Tracking System](#) (IVATS) is now live for the 2013–2014 influenza season. IVATS includes weekly updates from all distributors carrying influenza vaccine.

L.J also provided a reminder that some copies of the Summit influenza and pneumococcal [pocket guides](#) produced by the IAC remain available for bulk (10 or more copies) distribution.

Finally, L.J announced that a webinar, “Becoming an In-Network Provider. The Health Department Perspective”, is being offered by NACCHO on November 18 from 3 – 4 p.m. ET. The public health system is transforming due to the impact of the Affordable Care Act and the decline in federal and state discretionary funds. Public health departments have begun seeking alternative sources of revenue to continue providing services in their community. Many health departments are exploring

billing for clinical services provided and are trying to become a contracted in-network provider with health plans. The 60-minute webinar will include speakers from Mississippi, New York, and North Dakota sharing their contracting experiences. Attendees will learn about contracting processes for health departments; strategies to address barriers when contracting with third-party payers; and what resources are available in NACCHO's Billing for Clinical Services Toolkit. Registration information is available [here](#).

2. CDC/Influenza Division Weekly Influenza Surveillance Report and CDC Key Points

The CDC weekly influenza surveillance report for week 43 (ending October 26, 2013) is available [here](#), and region specific data may be viewed [here](#). During week 43, 5.6% of all deaths reported through the 122-Cities Mortality Reporting System were due to P&I. This percentage was below the epidemic threshold of 6.3% for week 43. No influenza-associated pediatric deaths were reported to CDC during week 43; the total number of reported pediatric deaths for the 2012–2013 season remains at 167. Nationwide during week 43, 1.2% of patient visits reported through the U.S. Outpatient Influenza-like Illness Surveillance Network (ILINet) were due to influenza-like illness (ILI). This percentage is below the national baseline of 2.0%. ILI is defined as fever (temperature of 100°F [37.8°C] or greater, and cough and/or sore throat. An Influenza Summary [Update](#) of the influenza activity reported by state and territorial epidemiologists indicates the geographic spread of influenza viruses, but does not measure the intensity of influenza activity.

Three states (Louisiana, Mississippi, and Texas) experienced low ILI activity, and forty-seven states (Alabama, Alaska, Arizona, Arkansas, California, Colorado, Connecticut, Delaware, Florida, Georgia, Hawaii, Idaho, Illinois, Indiana, Iowa, Kansas, Kentucky, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, Nevada, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New Mexico, New York, North Carolina, North Dakota, Ohio, Oklahoma, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, South Carolina, South Dakota, Tennessee, Utah, Vermont, Virginia, Washington, West Virginia, Wisconsin, and Wyoming) and New York City experienced minimal ILI activity. Data were insufficient to calculate an ILI activity level from the District of Columbia.

Archives of previous *FluViews* are available [here](#). CDC's updated key messages for the 2013-2014 influenza season may be found [here](#), and the seasonal influenza key points for November 1, 2013 are available [here](#).

3. More information from CDC

• You're Doing Great Work! Tweet About It!

CDC is encouraging organizations to tweet about their flu prevention awareness activities on Twitter and tag @CDCFlu, including hashtag #vaxwithme. Share an activity or event with or without a picture, and @CDCFlu may retweet your message. @CDCFlu has more than 273,000 followers and can help raise awareness about your flu vaccination efforts. We're grateful for the great work you're doing and want to share it with others!

• Submit Flu Prevention Partner Activities

There are 2 ways to share your activities on CDC's flu vaccination partner website.

- Enter your organization's seasonal flu activities that are currently taking place into the online calendar of events; and
- Explain your organization's successes and lessons learned from specific flu prevention activities, as way to educate others and contribute to best practices. Success stories will be featured at the top of the CDC flu prevention partner website and will be highlighted on the @CDCFlu Twitter handle.

4. 3 Strains of Influenza in Iowa

Three strains of influenza have been identified in Iowa, the state Department of Public Health [reported](#) Monday. No confirmed cases of the flu have yet been reported in North Iowa, a spokeswoman for the Cerro Gordo County Department of Public Health said. Strains circulating are H1N1 (2009 pandemic strain), H3N2 (regular seasonal flu strain) and a strain of the Influenza B subtype.

"If three strains are circulating, that's three opportunities to get sick with influenza this year," said Karen Crimmings, Cerro Gordo County Health Department disease prevention services manager.

5. Can Oregon Force Kids to get Immunized? Oregon Supreme Court Takes Up Case

The Oregon Supreme Court will decide whether the state can force parents to immunize their children. The justices will begin hearing a [case](#) on Tuesday involving a Marion County family whose children were taken by the state last year. In this case, eight children were taken from their parents for neglect or abuse. At issue is whether the state, as legal guardian for the children, can immunize them even if their parents object for religious reasons.

The number of parents in Oregon deciding not to immunize their children is growing. More than 6% of school-aged kids -- the highest percentage in the country -- are not immunized. State health leaders said as a result they see children, especially infants, hospitalized each year from preventable diseases like whooping cough.

6. RI Health Dept. to Partner with Cities, Towns to Offer Free Immunization Clinics

Rhode Island's Department of Health is offering a series of free vaccinations [clinics](#) across the state for children and adults. The department said Monday it will partner with cities and towns over the next six weeks to offer vaccinations at 19 clinics. Available vaccines include influenza; Tdap, which protects against tetanus, diphtheria, and pertussis; and the vaccine that protects against pneumonia. Insurance isn't required, but people who have coverage are asked to bring their insurance cards.

7. Healthy Children Can Die from Influenza

On October 28, a CDC-authored [study](#), "Influenza-Associated Pediatric Deaths in the United States, 2004–2012," was published in the journal *Pediatrics*. The study describes the epidemiology of influenza-related pediatric deaths from the 2004–2005 through the 2011–2012 influenza seasons.

From October 2004 through September 2012, 830 pediatric influenza-associated deaths were reported to the CDC. The median age was 7. The study found 35 percent of children died before hospital admission. Of the 794 children with a known medical history, 43 percent had no high-risk medical conditions, 33 percent had neurological disorders, and 12 percent had genetic or chromosomal disorders. Children without high-risk medical conditions were more likely to die before hospital admission and within three days of symptom onset than those with high-risk medical conditions.

[Talking points](#) on the study and a CDC *Flu Spotlight* [article](#) are available. In addition, articles may be viewed [here](#) and [here](#).

8. The Dos and Don'ts of Implementing a Mandatory Influenza Shot Vaccine Policy

Before instituting a mandatory flu-shot policy, review relevant collective-bargaining agreements and listen to employees who object, writes Meredith Murphy of Drinker Biddle & Reath. "The Equal Employment Opportunity Commission ... has taken the position that employees may be exempt from a mandatory vaccination requirement based on an ADA disability or a 'sincerely held religious belief, practice, or observance,'" Murphy writes. The full story may be viewed [here](#).

9. 2013 ISPE Facility of the Year Awards Program Names Novartis's United States Flu Cell Culture Facility as Overall Winner

ISPE [announced](#) during the Plenary Session at its 2013 Annual Meeting in Washington, D.C. USA, that Novartis's United States Flu Cell Culture Facility is the Overall Winner of the 2013 Facility of the Year Awards (FOYA) program. Novartis's United States Flu Cell Culture Facility in Holly Springs, North Carolina represents a breakthrough use of innovative technology and development of a large scale manufacturing process to produce seasonal and pandemic influenza vaccines.

10. Working Together to Increase Immunization; Health Care Workers Urged to Get the Flu Shot

Ontario's Chief Medical Officer of Health, Dr. Arlene King, is urging health care workers to get their flu shot and stay healthy. Dr. King joined representatives from Ontario hospitals and long-term care at [HealthAchieve](#), one of the largest and most respected health care events in North America, to kick off a flu immunization awareness campaign aimed at health system employees.

11. Tell, Don't Ask When It Comes to Vaccinating Kids

Pediatricians who [told](#) parents their child needed a vaccination rather than asked if they wanted one met less parental resistance, researchers found.

Three-quarters of providers brought up the issue of vaccination by using a "presumptive" approach, which assumes parents will immunize their child, according to Douglas J. Opel, MD, MPH, of the University of Washington School of Medicine in Seattle, and colleagues.

Only 26% of parents were resistant to vaccine recommendations when providers used the presumptive approach. However, 83% resisted when providers used a "participatory" approach, which invites parental involvement, researchers noted in the [study](#) published online Nov. 4 in *Pediatrics*.

12. California Releases Form Required to Avoid School Vaccinations

To exempt a child from required vaccinations, a parent and a doctor must sign the new Personal Belief Exemption form under a state [law](#) that takes effect January 1. Parents who do not wish to vaccinate their children against common childhood diseases before entering school must now obtain a doctor's signature on a new form released October 20. However, Governor Brown added into the new law an option to exempt a child from immunization based on a religious belief that "prohibits me from seeking medical advice or treatment from authorized health care practitioners." The addition was not supported by the California Immunization Coalition.

Check [here](#) and [here](#) for additional resources about school immunization laws.

13. US Makes Experimental Vaccine Against Childhood Virus

On October 31, U.S.-funded scientists at [NIH](#) said they have devised an experimental [vaccine](#) against a common childhood illness called respiratory syncytial virus (RSV). There is currently no vaccine on the market for RSV, which is the world's second-leading killer of babies aged one month to one year, after malaria.

14. Voices for Vaccines Offers Conference Call on Vaccines and the Media

[Voices for Vaccines](#) is a parent-driven organization supported by scientists, doctors, and public health officials that provides parents with clear, science-based information about vaccines and vaccine-preventable disease. The group is extending an invitation to anyone interested in attending their November 5 conference call, *Vaccines and the Media*, to be held on November 5 at 11 a.m. EST. The session will include a discussion on the ways journalists can successfully and honestly report on vaccine issues and how members of the public can respond to what they see in the media. The featured speaker will be Curtis Brainard, contributing editor of the *Columbia Journalism Review*. To register, send an email [here](#).

15. Google Refining Flu Spread Methodology as Flu Season Approaches

Since 2008, Google annually has reviewed influenza infection statistics around the world and created models to estimate the seriousness of influenza in a wide swath of nations, including the United States. But this year, Google is updating its influenza data analysis [methods](#) for U.S. cases. Last year's 2012 to 2013 Google Flu Trends model overestimated the severity of influenza cases that actually occurred in this country during that period, according to an Oct. 29 post by Christian Stefansen, a Google software engineer, on The Official Google.org Blog. The models look at the number of web searches that are conducted by people seeking information about the influenza, which Google says is a good indicator of influenza levels.

16. Kaiser Permanente Flu Prevention Tweet Chat

[Get the facts about the flu](#): Join a live twitter discussion with Kaiser Permanente infectious disease physicians, Randy Bergen, MD, Margaret Khoury, MD, and Eric Harker, MD, as they talk about prevention and treatment this flu season. The tweet chat takes place on November 14 at 1 p.m. Pacific time. To participate, click [here](#) and enter #kphealthychat.

Times in various time zones

Hawaii	9 –10 am
Pacific	noon – 1 pm
Mountain	1 – 2 pm
Central	2 – 3 pm
Eastern	3 – 4 pm

If you have questions about the November 14 TweetChat, please contact [Vince Golla](#) or [Lisa Brill](#).

17. Immune Suppressor Makes One Influenza Vaccine Work for Many Viruses

Researchers have recently found a way to render one vaccine protective against a number of different subtypes of influenza. The researchers behind the new [results](#) immunized mice against one subtype of influenza (HKx31). Along with the vaccine, some of the mice also got rapamycin, an immunosuppressant, while others didn't. Then all the mice were infected with a different, highly lethal influenza strain (Δ Vn1203). Fewer of the mice who got rapamycin with their initial vaccine died from this lethal strain. When they gave some of the mice rapamycin alone, without the HKx31 vaccination, the lethal influenza strain killed just as many treated mice as controls—so both the virus and vaccine are required to elicit the protective effect. Speculation is that rapamycin has been shown to promote the generation of memory CD8+ T cells; while these cells cannot prevent influenza viruses from infecting other cells, they help get rid of infected cells and thus decrease influenza-related mortality. An additional story is available [here](#).

18. Reactivation of Dormant Chickenpox Virus Causes Shingles in Young and Old

About one in three Americans will suffer from [shingles](#) during their lifetime, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and an estimated 1 million will have an outbreak each year. About half of all cases strike people 60 or older. The reason for the dormant virus' unwanted reactivation from its dormant state in the nerves is still not completely understood.

The painful, sometimes debilitating complications that can come from this disease are why everyone over the age of 60 is encouraged to get the shingles vaccine, which is 30 to 40 percent effective in preventing shingles. The vaccine is often covered by insurance plans or Medicare for patients older than 60. While the U.S. Food and Drug Administration has approved its usage for anyone 50 or older, many will have to pay out of pocket to get it early – and it could run \$300 or more without insurance.

19. High Risk of Enveloping Meningococcal Disease Along with HIV/AIDS

New [research](#) published in journal *Annals of Internal Medicine* suggests that people living in New York City suffering from HIV/AIDS are exposed to greater risk of contracting invasive meningococcal disease. Both diseases are deadly and could be really dangerous. There is a big need to recognize real risk and get treated in same manner.

According to the authors, “Cost effectiveness and vaccine efficacy studies are needed in order to evaluate the value of a national recommendation for routine meningococcal vaccination of people living with HIV and AIDS.”

The full story may be viewed [here](#).

20. Refusing HPV Vaccination Leaves Girls at an Increased Risk of Cancer

In the United Kingdom, girls from ethnic minorities are less likely to be vaccinated against human papillomavirus, leaving them exposed to a higher risk of cancer, reveals new [research](#). Researchers from the Cancer Research UK health and behavior research center at University College London surveyed 2,000 girls from 13 London schools. They were asked if they had received the HPV vaccine, among other questions about smoking and if they were sexually active. This survey revealed that many of the unvaccinated girls did not plan on attending cervical screening in the future.

And in Australia, a [study](#) of the coverage rates for the human papillomaviruses published in the *Medical Journal of Australia* today found only 70 per cent of girls aged 12-17 were fully vaccinated at the end of a catch-up program run in 2007. While 83 percent of girls received the first dose, only 78 percent received the second dose, and just 70 percent received the third dose.

21. Study: Single Dose of HPV Vaccine May Be Sufficient to Protect Against Cervical Cancer

Women vaccinated with one dose of a human papillomavirus (HPV) vaccine had antibodies against the viruses that remained stable in their blood for four years, suggesting that a single dose of vaccine may be sufficient to generate long-term immune responses and protection against new HPV infections, and ultimately cervical cancer, according to a [study](#) published in *Cancer Prevention Research*, a journal of the American Association for Cancer Research. The full story may be found [here](#).

22. Authorities Rush to Protect Syrian Children from Polio Amid Tensions in Refugee Camps

Jordanian authorities are issuing massive immunizations against polio, measles and rubella in the Za'atari camp, where more than 120,000 Syrians have landed after being driven out of war-torn Syria. Authorities worry about an outbreak of polio in eastern Syria, which already has paralyzed at least 10 young children. Contrary to some reports, Jordan has not closed its borders, but is rather taking in about 400 refugees daily. The military is inoculating any child who crosses the border,

regardless of medical history. At least 19,000 Syrian children have been inoculated to prevent a polio outbreak in the refugee camps.

Stories on this issue are available [here](#) and [here](#).

23. The Flu and Hepatitis C: High Risk of Complications

Fall and winter months mean flu season is coming, and with it the many possible complications that come with influenza. People with chronic diseases like hepatitis C need to protect themselves from the flu because they are at higher risks for flu-related complications.

In the United States, more than 3 million people are infected with hepatitis C, though most who are don't know it. If you are one of these people, you are at risk of flu complications including worsening of your underlying liver condition, pneumonia, bronchitis, sinus infections and ear infections.

But you can lower your risk of being hospitalized for flu complications by getting the flu shot. A recent Japanese study showed that the flu vaccine can be protective against hospitalization for people with hepatitis C. Vaccination for influenza cut the odds of being hospitalized in half for a group of 408 patients who had chronic hepatitis C, as reported in the medical journal *Liver International* in August 2013.

Click [here](#) for an additional news story.

24. Multimillion Dollar Contract Provides Funding to Continue Vaccine Research

Baylor College of Medicine is one of nine institutions that have been awarded a Vaccine and Treatment Evaluation Unit (VTEU) [contract](#) from the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases (NIAID), part of the National Institutes of Health (NIH). With these contracts, the NIAID is able to expand the ability of the VTEUs to conduct research in domestic and international research locations, including resource-poor settings. Each institution has the potential to receive funding up to \$135 million annually over a seven-year period.

Currently, BCM VTEU investigators are studying candidate pandemic influenza vaccines (including H7N9 'bird flu' and H3N2v 'swine flu' vaccines), pneumococcal vaccines, novel seasonal influenza vaccines, an HIV vaccine and a smallpox vaccine.

25. Reassuring Findings for Moms-to-Be Who Get Influenza Shots

Many mothers-to-be expressed concern if the flu vaccination would affect the baby, so researchers analyzed data from the flu seasons of 2009-12 involving about 1,100 mothers. Researchers from the University of California, San Diego School of Medicine and Boston University, in collaboration with the American Academy of Allergy Asthma and Immunology found evidence of the H1N1 influenza vaccine's safety during pregnancy. The national [study](#), which began shortly after the H1N1 influenza outbreak of 2009, found women who were vaccinated were no more likely to have a miscarriage and no more likely to have a baby with a birth defect than women who were not vaccinated. An additional story is available [here](#).

26. Pregnant Women Cite Safety Concerns for Skipping Influenza Vaccinations

Safety concerns significantly affect pregnant women's decisions to receive recommended vaccinations, according to study [results](#) published in the *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report*.

Researchers surveyed 996 women who gave birth in Massachusetts from September 2009 to May 2010. The results indicated 67.5% of participants received the seasonal vaccine and 57.6% received the pH1N1 vaccine. Women who received a recommendation from their provider were more likely to receive the seasonal vaccine, 75.8% vs. 32.4%, and the pH1N1 vaccine, 68.1% vs. 8.6%.

Safety was a prevalent [reason](#) cited for not receiving vaccinations. Of women who did not receive the seasonal vaccine, 43% reported they were worried about harm to their baby and 37.5% were worried about adverse effects to themselves. Of those who did not receive the pH1N1 vaccine, 52.8% were concerned about harm to their baby and 50.6% concerned about adverse effects to themselves.

27. Health Disparities Group Pushing for Equality in Immunizations

A working group of Black leaders is calling on the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to [expand](#) the recommendations for the bacterial meningitis vaccine to include infants as young as 6 months old.

28. HHS Awards \$15 Million for Influenza Vaccine Development and GMP Training

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Office of the Assistant Secretary for Preparedness and Response [announced](#) on October 23 that it awarded \$15 million to two international organizations and two universities for influenza research. The grants were awarded for the development of enhanced influenza vaccine capabilities in developing countries and for training on how to develop influenza vaccines for developing nations while still following Good Manufacturing Practices. The grants are the most recent investment toward influenza vaccine development by ASPR's Biomedical Advanced Research and Development Authority.

29. 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>.

30. 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.