



## **WV TO EXPAND FLU VACCINE PRIORITY GROUPS JANUARY 10, 2005**

**TO: West Virginia Local Health Departments, Physicians, Hospitals, Health Care Professional Organization and Societies and Other Health Care Professionals**

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**LOCAL HEALTH DEPARTMENTS:** PLEASE DISTRIBUTE TO COMMUNITY VACCINE PROVIDERS, HEALTH CARE FACILITIES, AND OTHER APPLICABLE PARTNERS

**OTHER RECIPIENTS:** PLEASE DISTRIBUTE TO ASSOCIATION MEMBERS, STAFF, ETC.

This advisory is aimed at guiding WV providers and facilities in implementing the 12/17/04 Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) recommendation to consider expanding 2004-05 flu vaccine priority groups in locations where state and local health authorities judge vaccine supply to be adequate to meet demand. Secondly, it announces changes to those eligible to receive Vaccines for Children (VFC) vaccine. Finally, it reminds all providers with flu vaccine to continue vaccinating well into January and beyond, or as long as supplies now arriving in communities last.

### **EXPANSION OF FLU VACCINE PRIORITY GROUPS DELAYED UNTIL JANUARY 10, 2005, IN WEST VIRGINIA**

On 12/17/04, the ACIP passed the following recommendation:

“In locations where state and local health authorities judge vaccine supply to be adequate to meet demand, the priority groups for inactivated influenza vaccine will include adults aged 50-64 and out of home caregivers and household contacts of persons in high risk groups, beginning January 3, 2005.”

WV still has high-risk individuals seeking vaccination. Based on a survey of local health departments and the fact that many private providers are just now receiving vaccine for their highest priority patients, **West Virginia health officials are delaying expansion of 2004-05 flu vaccine priority groups by one week until January 10, 2005.** This is to give those at highest risk of influenza and its complications (original 2004-05 target group) first preference on vaccine now arriving in the state.

## **IMMEDIATE EXPANSION OF VACCINES FOR CHILDREN (VFC) FLU VACCINE ELIGIBILITY**

Several facilities in West Virginia and elsewhere in the country have vaccine targeted for VFC recipients remaining. On 12/17/04 the ACIP expanded use of this vaccine to now include not only VFC eligible children falling within the original target groups, but also VFC eligible children who are household contacts or out of home caregivers of persons in high risk groups. This is effective immediately in WV.

### **NEEDED ACTION**

#### **Beginning January 10, expand eligibility for 2004-05 flu vaccine as supplies allow.**

Providers should use their clinical judgment given available supplies and patient risk of flu and its complications. Those in the original 2004-05 highest priority groups should still be given first priority; however, all vaccine should be used this season and therefore priority groups will be expanded from January 10, 2005, forward as follows.

Through January 9, 2005, eligible vaccine recipients include:

- All children aged 6-23 months
- Adults aged 65 years and older
- Persons aged 2-64 years with underlying chronic medical conditions
- All women who will be pregnant during influenza season
- Residents of nursing homes and long-term care facilities
- Children 6 months-18 years of age on chronic aspirin therapy
- Health-care workers with direct patient care
- Out-of-home caregivers and household contacts of children aged <6 months.

From January 10, 2005 forward, the following groups may be added:

- Adults aged 50 - 64 years
- Household contacts or out of home caregivers of persons in high risk groups above.

#### **Continue encouraging vaccination throughout the season--well into January and beyond.**

Flu typically peaks in January to February in West Virginia. To date, only 5 culture confirmed cases have been identified.

#### **Expand use of remaining VFC vaccine to include VFC eligible children who are household contacts or caregivers of high risk groups.**

Supplies allow immediate implementation of this expansion. Vaccinate children (first or second dose) on a first come, first serve basis. First time vaccinees (age < 9 y.o.) who received only one dose last year need only one dose this year.

**Help maximize full use of vaccine within your community.** If you can accept patient referrals for vaccine, please notify your local health department. If you have remaining vaccine to share with others, also notify your local health department so that your supply can be sold at cost or donated (at the discretion of the provider with vaccine) to another entity in need.

For further information contact your local health department or the West Virginia Immunization Program at 304/558-2188, toll-free:1-800-642-3634, or CDC at 1-800-FLU-INFO.

##This Message was distributed to Local Health Departments, Professional Societies (e.g., APIC, AAP, AAFP, ACP, WVHCA, WVHA, etc.), WVDHHR Disaster Network and Health Care Providers via WVM##

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