

14 June 2010

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To: General Practitioners, Practice Nurses, Practice Managers and Health Professionals

From: David Wansbrough, Manager, Immunisation team, Ministry of Health

Dear colleague

Thank you all for your on-going commitment to the 2010 influenza season. Over 970,000 doses have been distributed so far this year – great work.

1. Extending subsidised influenza immunisation until vaccine supplies run out

- Subsidised influenza immunisation will continue beyond 30 June until vaccine supplies run out (to maximise protection against pandemic influenza and to compensate for the disruption to vaccine supplies experienced this season).
- Eligibility criterion for free immunisation remains the same.
- There are limited supplies of vaccine available so distribution will be on a “first come first served” basis.
- All children under nine years of age are recommended to have two doses of vaccine in 2010 so ensure you have secured both doses while supplies are available.
- Electronic claiming will be available for immunisations given after 30 June for eligible individuals.
- There will be some communication activities to support the extension beyond 30 June.

2. Update - Seasonal influenza programme in Australia

On 1 June 2010 the Chief Medical Officer of Australia provided an update on their seasonal influenza programme. Key points included:

- The suspension of the seasonal influenza programme continues for healthy children under five years of age.
- Epidemiological analyses to date point to a higher rate of febrile convulsions in children under five years following the use of influenza vaccination with the FLUVAX™ brand.
- The investigation so far has not identified any factors that would explain the higher than expected rates of fever with convulsions following influenza vaccination with FLUVAX™.

The Ministry's advice in New Zealand remains the same – continue to vaccinate children in need of protection from influenza with the currently available seasonal influenza vaccine, VAXIGRIP® brand.

If you require more information please email 0800IMMUNE@auckland.ac.nz or phone 0800 466 863 (0800 IMMUNE).



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