



National Influenza Vaccine Summit

Influenza Activity Spotlights

Friday, December 16, 2011

Issue #9

Professional Medical Organizations
Please disseminate widely to all of your members.

There will be no Summit calls until 2012. The next call will take place on Thursday, January 5, 2012.

1. Summary of the National Influenza Vaccine Summit Call, December 15, 2011

Carolyn Bridges with CDC facilitated the call in the absence of LJ Tan.

Flu Near You: Susan Polan from the American Public Health Association (APHA) presented [information](#) about the organization's *Flu Near You Challenge*. APHA has partnered with [HealthMap](#) to promote *Flu Near You*, a unique program that provides an engaging mechanism to enlist the general public in influenza surveillance. *Flu Near You* reports from individuals are combined with more traditional surveillance sources to develop information and maps describing the spread of disease in a community. It is hoped that this new tool can help facilitate early threat detection in individual communities.

Flu Near You utilizes an online program to collect information from registered participants. During the initial registration process these individuals provide basic demographic information and their zip code, as well as their influenza vaccine history for the current season. They then receive a weekly message asking whether they have experienced specific influenza symptoms during the previous week. After completing the online survey, participants may view a map providing a compilation of reports for their community. Ultimately this information will be evaluated and compared with other data sources to determine if this new reporting mechanism can help communities "get ahead of the curve" during influenza season.

The APHA Challenge promotes registration of new participants in the *Flu Near You* system. APHA members who assist in recruiting new participants are eligible for [awards](#) totaling more than \$150,000. Although the APHA Challenge was initiated only in early November, several thousand persons from every state in the country are now participating in the system. It is hoped that many more individuals will have join this surveillance effort before the end of the influenza season. APHA developed its Challenge in an effort to increase participation, but APHA involvement is not required for registration; individuals can register directly in the system at the *Flu Near You* [website](#). Answers to [Frequently Asked Questions](#) about the Challenge are available. In addition, Summit members may contact Dr. Polan directly at susan.polan@apha.org.

Surveillance: Scott Epperson with CDC provided an [update](#) on seasonal influenza surveillance through Week 49, ending December 10, 2011. So far there has been little activity; all influenza indicators are at or below baseline levels, and there have been no pediatric deaths during the current season. Although the total number of specimens tested to date is small, all type A positives have

been similar to the strains found in this season's vaccine. Type B results have been more mixed in regard to similarity to the vaccine strain, but this is based on a very small number of samples. Two new cases of novel influenza have been reported in West Virginia and Wisconsin. The West Virginia report is similar to previous cases of swine-origin H3N2 disease from Iowa reported in the [MMWR](#), but the Wisconsin report is for novel H1N1. Neither case had a known exposure to pigs. No new confirmed cases have been associated with these reports, but investigation is ongoing. It is conjectured that finding these novel cases may not be that unusual; rather, PCR testing may be finding cases that might have gone undetected in prior years. Additional information is available on the CDC [website](#).

Mid-Season Influenza Vaccine Coverage Estimates: Erin Kennedy with CDC presented mid-season coverage [estimates](#) for the general population, pregnant women and health care personnel. The estimates suggest vaccine coverage levels are on track with the 2010–2011 season, but many children and adults remain unvaccinated. Although racial and ethnic disparities in vaccine coverage have been greatly reduced in children, these disparities persist among adults. The majority of both children and adults are vaccinated in a physician's office or another medical facility, but adults also frequently receive vaccination in other venues such as pharmacies. Approximately one-half of persons participating in the National Flu Survey were unaware that all individuals age ≥ 6 months are recommended to receive influenza vaccine. Vaccination coverage for health care personnel is approximately 7% higher when compared with this time last year. Information about whether this increase is connected to immunization mandates is unavailable at this time. Influenza vaccination coverage among pregnant women is similar to this time last year. Persons who received a vaccine recommendation from their provider were 7 times more likely to be immunized, highlighting the critical importance of provider recommendations. Even with coverage increases in groups such as health care personnel, overall rates are expected to fall well below Healthy People 2020 objectives. Summit partners wishing to obtain additional information on these estimates should contact Erin at edkennedy@cdc.gov.

More detailed information on the surveys used to develop the mid-season coverage estimates is available from the [National Flu Survey](#), the [Health Care Personnel Internet Panel Survey](#) and the [Pregnant Women Internet Panel Survey](#). General influenza vaccine coverage information is available at [FluVaxView](#). A transcript and audio recording from the NIVW [telebriefing](#) are available.

2. **The CDC/Influenza Division Weekly Influenza Surveillance Report** for Week 49 (ending December 10, 2011) is available [here](#) or may be viewed at www.cdc.gov/flu/weekly. This site includes maps of ILI State Activity and the [geographic spread](#) of influenza illness as reported by state and territorial epidemiologists. [Archives](#) of previous *FluViews* are available.
3. **National Association of School Nurses (NASN) Releases White Paper on School-Located Vaccination (SLV) and New Seasonal Influenza Resources**

The [SLV White Paper](#) is drawn largely from the deliberations and recommendations of *School-Located Vaccination Clinics: Protecting America's Health*, a cross-sector, interdisciplinary meeting held November 16–17, 2010, in Washington, D.C. The meeting was co-convened by the Association of State and Territorial Health Officials (ASTHO), the National Association of County and City Health Officials (NACCHO), and the National Association of School Nurses (NASN), with the goal of developing an action plan for promoting and sustaining SLV. Nichole Bobo provided a verbal report on the White Paper during the Summit conference call on December 1, 2011.

NASN also has begun a *Fighting the Flu Happens at School* [campaign](#), a month-by-month effort to help schools raise awareness about the importance of seasonal influenza vaccination. Each month the campaign features a vaccine focus, national activities, suggested actions and sample resources. A booklet about the campaign can be downloaded [here](#).

Finally, NASN conducted a radio interview with Dr. Carole Baker, Chair of NFID's Childhood Influenza Immunization Committee, discussing the important role of school nurses in promoting influenza vaccination. The discussion asks school nurses to be role models by being vaccinated themselves, as well as recommending vaccine for students and school staff. The interview is available on both [NASN radio](#) and [iTunes](#).

4. Massachusetts Releases New Influenza and Disparities Resource

The Immunization Program of the Bureau of Infectious Diseases at the Massachusetts Department of Public Health has collaborated with its Office for Health Equity on the development of a [manual](#), *Flu Vaccine for Everyone: Reaching and Engaging Diverse Communities*. The Immunization Program has received a great deal of positive feedback on this manual and is happy to share it with the Summit.

5. Every Child By Two Hosts Influenza Bloggers Call

Every Child by Two recently hosted a [call](#) for influenza bloggers in order to provide them with information on seasonal influenza and the universal vaccine recommendation. Featured presenters included Dr. Bill Schaffner and Jen Lastinger, a parent advocate from [Families Fighting Flu](#), who lost her young daughter, Emily, to influenza.

6. Information on Novel Swine-Origin H3N2 Infections

CDC has established a [website](#) containing consolidated information on recently reported cases of novel influenza A (H3N2).

7. Study Suggests Statins Reduce Deaths in Severe Influenza Infections

On December 14 the Journal of Infectious Diseases published an online [article](#) indicating the use of statins was associated with a 41% lower death rate in patients who were hospitalized with influenza. These findings were developed from a 2007–2008 influenza season surveillance study from ten states. The study links deaths to lab-confirmed influenza, providing a significant addition to the slowly mounting evidence that statins may reduce the annual influenza burden. A CIDRAP [summary](#) of this survey also is available.

8. University of California Irvine Medical Center Raises HCW Influenza Immunization Rates with Mandatory Policy

The University of California Irvine Medical Center has raised its employee influenza vaccination rate above 90 percent by shifting from a voluntary vaccination program to one mandating all healthcare workers either get vaccinated or wear a mask at work for the entire influenza season (December through March). A five-year [study](#) of evolving influenza vaccination programs at University of California Irvine Medical Center is published in the January 2012 issue of *Infection Control and Hospital Epidemiology*, the journal of the Society for Healthcare Epidemiology of America. According to the authors, the results suggest voluntary programs are not enough to get meaningful increases in influenza vaccination rates for healthcare workers. A press release describing the study is available [here](#).

9. Study Shows Possible 14–16% Transmission of 2009 H1N1 from Patients to Healthcare Workers

As detailed in an [article](#) in the December 2011 issue of *Infection Control and Hospital Epidemiology*, 16% of HCWs (n=139) who were exposed to 6 of the first 8 laboratory-confirmed 2009 pandemic influenza patients in the U.S. were infected with the virus. A summary of the study is available on the Center for Biosecurity UPMC [website](#).

10. Innovative Facility to Produce Cell-based Pandemic Influenza Vaccine

A new vaccine manufacturing plant which can create vaccine using cultured animal cells instead of the conventional process of using fertilized eggs was dedicated this week in Holly Springs, North Carolina. This is the first United States facility to use a faster and more flexible technology to make influenza vaccine. According to a [press release](#) from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), the dedication ceremony signals that the facility can produce cell-based influenza vaccine that could be authorized by the FDA for use during an influenza pandemic emergency.

The facility is being established as a public-private partnership between HHS and Novartis Vaccines and Diagnostics Inc. of Cambridge, Massachusetts. This partnership will be maintained under contract for at least 25 years.

11. Summit Influenza Pocket Information Guide still available!

Every year, the Summit collaborates with the Immunization Action Coalition to create and distribute the *Influenza Pocket Information Guide*. The 2011-2012 edition is still available for [order](#).

12. Summit Website Offers Wonderful Resources on Influenza Vaccination!

Remember to visit the Summit [website](#) for the latest on influenza immunization resources!