



OCT 27 2004

To: Area Chief Medical Officers

From: Acting Chief Medical Officer

Subject: Action Plan for Addressing the Influenza Vaccine Shortage Among
Indian Health Service Facilities

PURPOSE

As the influenza season approaches, some facilities within the Indian Health Service (IHS), Tribal, and Urban (I/T/U) health care system may have little or no influenza vaccine available. Therefore, I am providing this action plan to assist Area and Service Unit program officials in distributing the vaccine doses that are or become available in an equitable, consistent, and efficient manner.

BACKGROUND

The suspension of Chiron's license to manufacture Fluvirin® vaccine by the United Kingdom's Medicines and Healthcare Products Regulatory Agency (MHRA) has reduced the number of available doses of influenza vaccine in the U.S. by at least 50 percent. Indian health sites ordering part or all of their influenza vaccine directly from Chiron or from State immunization programs which ordered some or all of their vaccine from Chiron, now find that they have received little or no influenza vaccine. To evaluate the extent of the problem within the I/T/U system, the Area Immunization Coordinators and the Division of Epidemiology conducted a review of I/T/U facilities and found that at least four IHS Areas would not receive a significant portion of their influenza vaccine orders. A rapid assessment is currently underway to identify specific facilities that need vaccine based on the updated Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) Interim Influenza Vaccination Recommendations.

The rapid assessment reveals that many vaccine orders have been shipped to I/T/U facilities as originally ordered. Orders placed through the Supply Service Centers in Ada, Gallup, and Perry Point were placed with Aventis Pasteur and are more than 95 percent filled. For facilities that did not use one of the above distributors, the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) has confirmed that all (100 percent) of 'appropriately identified' I/T/U program orders placed with Aventis Pasteur prior to the onset of the shortage will be delivered as ordered. The possibility of Aventis Pasteur providing up to 50 percent of orders placed with Chiron is being discussed with the CDC. The CDC has confirmed that 100 percent of the anticipated Vaccines For Children orders will be distributed to states and delivered to IHS and Tribal facilities for high-priority pediatric patients.

Even if additional supplies of vaccine are forthcoming from outside the U.S., it is unlikely that they will be sufficient to vaccinate all high-risk patients within the I/T/U system or elsewhere. Outbreaks of influenza will appear within the next few weeks, therefore our primary goal is to provide some degree of protection to the greatest number of our high-risk patients as possible. Influenza vaccine coverage rates never reach levels needed to provide protection to everyone within a community, but some degree of coverage will affect the magnitude of an outbreak. Therefore, our secondary goal is to provide at least partial coverage to all IHS communities.

ACTION PLAN

This action plan considers the limitations and our goals outlined previously, as well as our intention to provide an equitable, consistent, and efficient redistribution of vaccine doses. The plan includes:

- prioritization of patients to receive vaccine
 - immediate redistribution of surplus vaccine from Gallup Service Supply Center (GSSC)
 - guidelines for sharing vaccine within Indian health care system
 - guidelines for sharing vaccine outside Indian health care system
- I. Prioritization of patients to receive the vaccine
- a. All IHS clinics will develop an influenza vaccine policy for this season based on recommendations of the Public Health Service ACIP.
 - b. The ACIP recommendations are constantly revised to reflect changes in vaccine availability and supplies. The latest recommendations may be accessed at the CDC internet site (<http://www.cdc.gov/flu/protect/whoshouldget.htm>).
- II. Redistribution of surplus vaccine
- a. Because orders were placed to extend vaccination coverage beyond last year's rates, the GSSC has 19,400 doses of influenza vaccine available for distribution to areas with unmet vaccine supply needs. An additional 2,500 doses, identified from within the Billings Area, will be added to the GSSC supply, for a total of 21,900 doses.
 - b. These doses will be distributed based on a proportional distribution scheme to all I/T/U sites, including sites in the Alaska Area, that have reported receiving little or no vaccine as of October 22.

