

## Community Medicine Newsletter

### Update about the 2012-2013 Influenza Vaccine Program

#### **Flumist® vaccine eligibility extended to 2-59 years of age**

#### **If you are still offering flu vaccine, please pick up Flumist® for your adult patients.**

This year, Vancouver Coastal Health piloted the new intranasal live attenuated influenza vaccine, Flumist®. This is a superb vaccine that is preferentially recommended by the National Advisory Committee on Immunization for children 2-17 years of age but approved by Health Canada for use in adults up to 59 years of age. Acceptance of this vaccine was surprisingly lower than expected at public health units. We do not wish to waste this wonderful product and are thus extending the eligibility to adults up to 59 years of age in accordance with Health Canada indication.

Flumist® is a live-attenuated vaccine. It should not be given to children <24 months of age, pregnant women, those with a history of immune compromising conditions, severe asthma (on oral or high dose inhaled steroids) or active wheezing (medically attended wheezing in the past 7 days), children receiving aspirin-containing therapy, history of egg allergy, history of an anaphylactic reaction to either a previous dose of flu vaccine or Flumist® components, or a past history of Guillain Barré within 8 weeks of receipt of influenza vaccine.

#### **Other influenza vaccines still available**

While the influenza vaccine uptake has been higher this year than last, we still have limited quantities of Flud® (for persons ≥ 65 years of age) and Vaxigrip® available. Please continue to offer vaccine to your patients.

#### **Influenza season has started; significant H3N2 activity reported in the community. So far, there is an excellent match between vaccine and circulating flu virus.**

### Other Updates

#### **Pertussis outbreak declared over though we will continue to see sporadic cases**

This year we have witnessed an outbreak of pertussis in the Lower Mainland, including 270 cases in Vancouver Coastal Health. Pertussis activity has declined significantly this fall. Similar declines have been noted in Washington State, though their level of disease burden remains much higher than ours. While we will be declaring the outbreak over as of December 31, 2012, we can expect to see sporadic pertussis activity continue. Please remain vigilant for cases of pertussis, particularly in those at high risk of complications (children under one year of age and pregnant women) or their contacts. Publicly funded Adacel® vaccine (Tdap) will continue to be available for older children and adults only until December 31<sup>st</sup>. After that date, it will be provided free only to grade 9 students.

#### **Administration of recommended vaccines not supplied free by public health**

Thank you for continuing to discuss NACI recommended private pay vaccines with your patients as the CMPA recommends. If you provide a prescription for these vaccines, please discuss cold chain with your patients and arrange to vaccinate them at your office soon after they pick up vaccine from pharmacy.

Please do not send your patients with vaccine to public health units. Our nurses are not allowed to administer vaccine delivered outside the public health cold chain system.

If you have any questions, please call our immunization nurse on call at 604-983-6700.

Sincerely,



Brian A. O'Connor, MD, MHSc

Medical Health Officer

Vancouver Coastal Health, North Shore