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Health Officials
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SUPPORTS

NYSACHO Recommendation:

Influenza vaccination requirement for school-age children, teachers and staff

NYSACHO supports a mandatory flu vaccination requirement for the 2020-21 school year, for those students, teachers, and staff attending or working in schools serving students grades K-12.

NYSACHO additionally supports a permanent mandatory flu vaccination requirement for children ages 6 months or older attending, and all staff employed by, child care facilities.

Given limited local resources, to assure compliance, NYSACHO also recommends that New York State make available the necessary resources for implementation of a flu vaccine mandate. This may include access to free vaccine, and employment of additional staff to support vaccination clinics where there is limited community access to other providers of the influenza vaccine.

The 2017-2018 flu season was record breaking. Nationally, 187 pediatric deaths were attributed to the flu. In the 2018-19 season, as of April 6, 2019, six influenza related pediatric deaths have been reported in New York State. The potential for children to spread influenza within a school, daycare home, program or facility is high, and the most vulnerable infants are too young to be vaccinated. Vaccinating those above the age of 6 months against influenza, as well as caregivers, teachers and staff, is the best way to protect children.

Influenza vaccination is particularly important for the 2020-21 season, to ensure that limited hospital capacity and healthcare provider resources remain focused on, and available for care for individuals with COVID-19. It will also prevent spread within school settings, reducing the need for school closures due to influenza related illness.

Mandatory flu vaccination for children and staff in childcare settings will protect our most vulnerable, youngest children. Mandatory influenza vaccination of school age children and staff will help prevent a “twindemic” of COVID-19 and influenza, and reduce the need for remote only instruction for school age children. NYSACHO supports both measures and recommends immediate implementation of both requirements.

Contact: Sarah Ravenhall, sarah@nysacho.org