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To: Primary Care Teams, Health Professionals

From: Trish Farrelly, Acting Manager Immunisation

Subject: **Influenza, Shingles vaccine, Hepatitis B vaccine, Measles, FluTracking**

Influenza vaccine for children under 3 years: availability

Fluarix Tetra for children under 3 years ie 6 to 35 months is now available to order. Orders are restricted to five doses, as limited quantities are available – please reserve this for children aged 6 to 35 months old. Please do not plan clinics for young children until you have received the vaccine.

From 1 April 2019, PHARMAC, in consultation with the relevant DHBs, has removed the eligibility criteria which offered free influenza vaccine for under 18 year olds in Seddon Ward and rural eastern Marlborough region, Kaikoura and Hurunui. The standard eligibility criteria will now apply in those regions.

Shingles

While influenza immunisation season is a convenient opportunity to provide zoster vaccine to older patients who had not previously received it, please remember that unlike influenza, zoster vaccine is not an annual vaccine and only one dose is funded per patient. Those aged 66 to 80 have until 31 March next year (ie before next year's influenza immunisation programme) to be eligible for catch up vaccination.

An additional payment of \$15 is still available for administration of the Zostavax vaccine, when given in the same visit as an influenza vaccine. This process has not yet been automated through PMSs and practices should continue to claim this payment manually via their PHOs to DHBs.

Zoster vaccine can be administered year round. When it is administered separately from influenza vaccine, the usual immunisation payment can be claimed.

Hepatitis B vaccine

MSD has suspended manufacturing of the pediatric and adult formulations of HBvaxPRO (5, 10, 40 mcg). PHARMAC are not expecting a resupply before mid-2020.

HBvaxPRO 5mcg is still available for ordering, and HBvaxPRO 40mcg is also available in some locations. Engerix-B 20mcg is currently replacing HBvaxPRO 10mcg and HBvaxPRO 40mcg, where not available.

If you are ordering Engerix-B 20mcg to replace HBvaxPRO 40mcg you will need to order **two doses of Engerix-B 20mcg per patient** (these are to be given on the same day but separate sites to make up the 40mcg dose required in the high risk dialysis, liver or kidney transplant patients).

If you are ordering Engerix-B 20mcg to replace HBvaxPRO 10mcg, please order the same quantity and give the full dose to the patient.

Measles

A person in Bay of Plenty DHB has been diagnosed with measles, and is likely to have come into contact with large numbers of young mobile people while infectious. Please be on the alert for measles cases among your patients, especially in regions with large numbers of tourists or seasonal workers – symptoms are described at www.health.govt.nz/our-work/diseases-and-conditions/measles-information-health-professionals and in the resources available for download on that page. Those aged 17 and under are eligible for free measles immunisation regardless of their immigration status, as are contacts of measles cases.

Stocks of MMR vaccine are being managed carefully to maintain the National Immunisation Programme, support the Canterbury outbreak response and respond to increased demand due to publicity. There are sufficient stocks to support one and a half times normal usage nationally, so please continue to order your normal requirements but do not stockpile vaccine.

Please continue to focus on MMR vaccination at ages 15 months and 4 years, and if possible, older patients who have not previously been vaccinated against measles.

Updated information about measles cases and vaccine supply will be published on the Ministry of Health website at www.health.govt.nz/your-health/conditions-and-treatments/diseases-and-illnesses/measles/2019-measles-outbreak-information.

The Immunisation Advisory Centre is reporting a large number of calls to 0800 IMMUNE – many questions are addressed by the information on their website at www.immune.org.nz/hot-topic/measles-overseas-and-new-zealand – this can be printed out for staff reference.

FluTracking

The Ministry's online FluTracking initiative (<https://info.flutracking.net/>) is beginning its second year in New Zealand. Over 6,000 people signed up in 2018 to answering a brief weekly survey about influenza-like symptoms, and the more people who participate, the more accurate it is. FluTracking contributes to our influenza surveillance systems by giving a picture of illnesses that do not result in GP consultations or hospitalisation, as well as information about vaccination coverage. Please consider joining the programme and recommending it to your colleagues or patients.

Immunisation Week 2019

Immunisation Week 2019 is being celebrated in New Zealand from 29 April to 5 May. The theme, Protected Together, *#Immunise* celebrates the collective efforts of the sector to ensure we, our families, whānau and community are protected against serious diseases. It also promotes an inclusive approach to ensuring that our tamariki, whānau, iwi and community are all protected. By encouraging everyone in our communities to get immunised, we can reduce the spread of serious diseases, which benefits us all. Resources to support Immunisation Week are available for download from the Health Promotion Agency at www.hpa.org.nz/programme/immunisation.

If you have any queries about anything in this update, please email immunisation@moh.govt.nz