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To: Primary Care Teams, Health Professionals

From: Trish Farrelly, Acting Manager Immunisation

Subject: **Influenza start date and resources, Zoster, Measles, Meningococcal vaccine, HPV vaccine, Immunisation promotion, Recording on the NIR**

Influenza start date and resources

As previously advised, this year's influenza immunisation programme will begin from 1 April 2019. For further information, see the Ministry's policy statement on the [Annual Influenza Immunisation Programme Start Date](#). **In contrast to previous years, claims for funded influenza vaccines given before 1 April will not be accepted.** The Flu Kit will be available online at www.influenza.org.nz in early March, with hard copies and other printed resources distributed in the coming weeks.

As for 2018, there are two funded quadrivalent influenza vaccines for 2019

- Influvac Tetra – for adults and children 3 years and over
- Fluarix Tetra – for children under 3 years ie 6 to 35 months. Limited quantities of Fluarix Tetra are available – please reserve this for children aged 6 to 35 months old.

While we expect Influvac Tetra will be available to order in time for vaccination in the first week of April, Fluarix Tetra may arrive later. We will advise once we have further information. Please do not plan clinics for young children until these supplies have arrived.

During 2017 and 2018, Māori and Asian immunisation rates for those aged 65 and over were notably lower than for other ethnic groups. Please ensure all your 65 and over populations are offered annual influenza vaccination and that these are all recorded on the NIR.

Zoster Vaccinations

We would like to remind practices the funded Zostavax vaccine can be given to all 65 year olds throughout the calendar year. Those aged 66 years to 80 years (inclusive) are eligible for the vaccine until 31 March 2020 or they turn 81 years of age, whichever comes first. Regular monthly recalls of those who have turned 65 years and for those aged 66 to 80 years who have not already had the vaccination would help spread the workload throughout the year.

Measles

There are currently significant measles outbreaks overseas, including in the Philippines and some European countries. For countries that are affected, please check the Centres for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC, USA) website for travel updates - www.cdc.gov/measles/travelers.html.

The Ministry of Health is advising practices to be alert to the possibility of measles among patients who have recently travelled. We are also advising people travelling overseas to make sure they are fully immunised against measles before they go. In particular, the Ministry recommends that infants aged 6-15 months travelling to countries where there is a current measles outbreak be given MMR vaccine before they travel.

MMR can be given to infants aged 6-11 months if there is a high risk of exposure to measles. The vaccine given to this age group can be entered on the NIR using your PMS high risk MMR vaccine option leaving the scheduled 15 month and 4 year MMR vaccine still to be given in the future as per the Immunisation Schedule. These younger infants will need two further doses of MMR as per the Immunisation Schedule since the effectiveness of the vaccine is lower in this age group. The

additional vaccination at 6-11 months of age is funded. The scheduled 15 month MMR dose can be given as early as 12 months and is funded as usual.

For any further information, please consult the Communicable Disease Manual chapter regarding measles: www.health.govt.nz/our-work/diseases-and-conditions/communicable-disease-control-manual/measles. Ministry of Health measles information is available at: www.health.govt.nz/your-health/conditions-and-treatments/diseases-and-illnesses/measles.

Meningococcal vaccine availability and priority

Northland DHB has largely completed its targeted funded meningococcal ACWY vaccination programme to address a community outbreak of meningococcal W in that region. Private market supplies of the vaccine are separate to that sourced for the outbreak, but suppliers have reported high demand and there have been intermittent local shortages. Please see the Healthcare Logistics website (www.hcl.co.nz) for information about stock availability.

The Ministry acknowledges that there has been an increasing number of families requesting meningococcal vaccinations but advises that outside Northland the recommendations in the *Immunisation Handbook 2017* should continue to be followed. At this time of year, teenagers and young adults at boarding school or living in university hostel accommodation are likely to be seeking vaccination.

Updated information on meningococcal disease surveillance is available on the ESR webpage: https://surv.esr.cri.nz/surveillance/Meningococcal_disease.php.

HPV Vaccine supplies

General practices are able to order unrestricted quantities of HPV vaccine, as we have previously advised. Recalling patients at age 14 to complete HPV immunisation is important to ensure teens are protected before they are exposed to HPV. Those under 15 years only need two doses. This appointment is also a good opportunity to check other immunisations, eg Tdap and MMR, are up to date.

Our records show a significant number of young men have received the first dose of HPV vaccine, but not the second – we believe that this group is likely to have been affected by the supply shortage during late 2017 and most of 2018.

People who have begun the vaccination course (two doses for those aged 14 and under, three doses for those aged 15 and older) and are overdue for a second and/or third dose do not have to begin the course again, regardless of how long the time lapse has been. If the second HPV dose is given at age 15 years or older a third HPV dose is recommended and funded.

Those who have turned 27 years of age since 1 April 2018 and who receive their first dose of HPV vaccine by 1 April 2019, and international students who turn 18 years of age during this period, are still eligible to complete their free vaccination course. Please submit a manual claim for the first dose given. Once a manual claim has been accepted for dose one, any subsequent doses for that person should be able to be processed automatically. If any issues arise, a second manual claim may be needed.

Immunisation promotion

The Ministry and Health Promotion Agency have produced a series of videos promoting immunisation, one of which recently featured as television advertising. The videos are available on the Ministry's website at www.health.govt.nz/immunisation, and through our YouTube channel www.youtube.com/minhealthnz.

Recording Schedule Immunisations on NIR

Please remember that all funded National Immunisation Schedule vaccinations given to individuals at increased risk of vaccine preventable disease should be recorded on the NIR either through your usual process or manually if electronic applications are not available.

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