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To: Primary Care Teams, Health Professionals

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From: Rayoni Keith, Manager, Immunisation

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Subject: **Coverage update, Gardasil 9 supplies now available, Hepatitis B Adult vaccine, Influenza, Zoster, Rubella, Pertussis, Mumps.**

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### **Coverage update from Dr Pat Tuohy**

Thank you for your continued hard work and efforts to support all children having every opportunity to live longer and healthier lives through immunisation. The team at the Ministry wish you a happy and restful festive season.

Immunisation coverage rates at age 8 months remain at 92 percent. Timely Māori coverage remains a high priority for us and still requires specific attention in order to close the equity gap. It is promising to see that Māori coverage at this age has increased slightly to 88 percent, but there is a way to go to protect tamariki Māori from vaccine preventable diseases.

The recent widening of the equity gap is part of a bigger national trend of immunisation coverage being lower than last year, and I encourage you to continue working closely with your outreach teams, WCTO nurses, PHO, local iwi, Public Health Unit and paediatric services to provide reassurance to parents with questions.

Please continue to concentrate on offering immunisation to families who are delaying rather than declining immunisation, as that is a group you can directly affect. I believe it will help to work closely with our social service partners (MSD and Oranga Tamariki, including Family Start) to address some of the fundamental social issues affecting these families.

When families come in for their child's immunisation, you can suggest that they post about their child's immunisation on social media sites, such as Facebook. This will help to situate immunisation into the ordinary day-to-day lives of New Zealanders.

### **Gardasil 9 supplies now available – please resubmit any outstanding orders**

Supplies of Gardasil 9 have arrived in New Zealand, and sufficient quantities have been distributed to school based vaccination programmes to allow them to be completed. General practices can now place orders for both funded and private market vaccines. Outstanding vaccine orders have been cancelled to avoid duplication, so practices will need to resubmit their orders. Thank you for your patience during this time.

### **Hepatitis B Adult vaccine**

Stock of Engerix-B 20 mcg/ml, 1ml will be distributed to ProPharma branches from next week. This vaccine replaces Recombivax HB and will be the Hepatitis B adult vaccine used until early 2019. We expect that HBvaxPRO will be available in 2019. Engerix-B comes as a pre-filled syringe, in a single dose pack. Engerix-B is listed in the Pharmaceutical Schedule. HBvaxPRO Pediatric and 40mcg vaccines remain available. See <http://medsafe.govt.nz/profs/datasheet/e/Engerix-Binj.pdf>. A dose of Engerix-B 20mcg may also be used when a paediatric (HBvaxPRO 5mcg) presentation is not available.

### **Influenza Immunisation Programme**

More information about the funded influenza immunisation programme will be available in the new year.

## **Zoster (shingles) vaccine to be funded**

From 1 April 2018, Zostavax will be funded at age 65, with a catch up programme over two years for those aged 66 to 80. Note: patients who are immune compromised must **not** be given the zoster vaccine (refer to the Immunisation Handbook for more information).

The introduction of the zoster vaccine begins just after the start of the influenza programme, with the funded influenza vaccine likely to be available to practices in early to mid-March. It is an opportune time to plan for delivering your practice's influenza programme and organising the recall of patients who meet the eligibility criteria for zoster vaccination.

While it may be convenient to administer zoster and influenza vaccines to patients at the same visit, there is likely to be pressure on your vaccine fridge capacity at this time of year. We are working with PHARMAC to enable more frequent vaccine orders and will provide more information in the New Year. This is a good opportunity to review your cold chain policy to consider the impact of the zoster vaccine and ensure it is up to date.

The Ministry will be developing a fact sheet to address likely questions about funded zoster vaccination early in 2018. Details of the funding decision are available on the PHARMAC website at <https://www.pharmac.govt.nz/news/notification-2017-11-09-zoster-vaccine>. The zoster chapter of the Immunisation Handbook can be found online at [http://www.health.govt.nz/system/files/documents/publications/immunisation-handbook-2017-may17-v2.html#\\_Toc481671253](http://www.health.govt.nz/system/files/documents/publications/immunisation-handbook-2017-may17-v2.html#_Toc481671253), and will be updated in time for 1 April.

## **Rubella**

Elimination of congenital rubella has been one of the great successes of vaccination. However the ongoing mumps outbreak is signalling that there may be increases in women of child-bearing age who are also not immune to rubella, because they have not received two doses of MMR. An outbreak of rubella among this age group risks serious harm to fetal development. Any adult born from 1 January 1969 needs two documented doses of MMR vaccine. If you have any reason to doubt the vaccination status of female patients who may be considering pregnancy, offer MMR immunisation (and record it on the NIR) rather than refer them for serology. There are no safety concerns around receiving an extra dose of MMR vaccine, and it is free for anyone who needs it.

## **Pertussis**

The Ministry of Health has announced that New Zealand is in the early stages of a national outbreak of whooping cough (pertussis). Babies aged up to one are especially vulnerable to whooping cough.

Please reinforce the importance of maternal immunisation and timely infant immunisation as crucial ways for parents/whānau and pregnant women to protect their babies and children against whooping cough. Babies are at greatest risk when they are very young. When pregnant women are vaccinated, they pass their immunity on to their baby, protecting them until they are able to start their immunisations at 6 weeks.

Please work with your local midwives to help raise public awareness of the outbreak and steps they can take to prevent transmission, and precall any pregnant patients for whooping cough immunisation between 28 and 38 weeks' gestation.

## **Mumps**

Mumps cases continue to be reported across New Zealand with over 1100 cases reported since September 2016. The majority of cases are in young people aged between 10 and 19 years of age. While the majority of cases have been reported in the Auckland region, cases have also been reported from Waikato, Canterbury, Northland, Hawkes Bay, Lakes, Taranaki, Wellington, Nelson Marlborough, Bay of Plenty, Mid-Central, Southland and the West Coast. Please continue to help raise public awareness about mumps and remind patients that the best protection is MMR vaccine as noted above.

***If you have any queries about anything in this update, please email [immunisation@moh.govt.nz](mailto:immunisation@moh.govt.nz)***