August 15, 2017

Dear Chief Executive Officer:

The purpose of this letter is to remind you of the requirements for offering influenza vaccination to parents and anticipated caregivers of neonatal intensive care unit (NICU) patients and to each admitted person age sixty-five years or older.

**Requirement in NICUs:**

New York State Public Health Law (PHL) section 2805-h requires all hospitals with NICUs to offer influenza vaccination annually, between September 1 and April 1, to all persons who are parents, or who are reasonably anticipated to be caregivers in the households of newborns being treated in NICUs.

Influenza vaccination is not licensed for children aged less than six months. Oral oseltamivir is approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) for the treatment of influenza in persons 2 weeks and older, and for chemoprophylaxis in persons 1 year and older. Oseltamivir is not a substitute for early, annual influenza vaccination. To protect young infants, who have rates of hospitalization due to influenza that are similar to those observed among the elderly, immunization of infants’ close contacts is critical.

**Requirement for admitted persons age sixty-five years or older:**

PHL 2805-h also requires that the administrative officer, or other person in charge of each hospital, must ensure that influenza vaccine is offered to each admitted person aged 65 years or older. The requirement applies to all patients admitted between September 1 and April 1.

We strongly encourage you to continue your vaccination efforts against influenza even after the April 1st date required by law, as flu season often persists into the late spring.

Hospitals must take steps to adopt and implement both policies as required under law. Should you need further assistance, please call the New York State Department of Health, Bureau of Immunization at (518) 473-4437.

Sincerely,

Debra S. Blog, MD, MPH
Director of Division of Epidemiology
New York State Department of Health