



Central Coast
Division of
General Practice

SEASONAL INFLUENZA VACCINATION UPDATE

February 2010

The distribution of seasonal influenza vaccine to immunisation providers will commence in **mid to late March**. This short delay is due to the low yield of one of the virus strains (H3N2). The 2010 seasonal influenza vaccine contains three virus strains:

- A (H1N1): an A/California/7/2009 (H1N1) - like strain
- A (H3N2): an A/Perth/16/2009 (H3N2) - like strain
- B: a B/Brisbane/60/2008 - like strain

General Practitioners (GPs) can **pre-order** seasonal influenza vaccine by completing and sending the GP Vaccine Order Form available at http://www.health.nsw.gov.au/resources/publichealth/immunisation/GP_VACCINE_ORDER_FORM_2010.pdf

As previously advised (see http://www.health.nsw.gov.au/resources/publichealth/immunisation/2010_GP_Flu_letter_pdf.asp), the Australian Government has **extended the eligibility** for free seasonal influenza vaccine. In 2010, influenza vaccine will be provided free of charge to:

- All persons aged 65 years and older;
- Indigenous Australians and Torres Strait Islanders aged 15 years to 64 years;
- Indigenous and non-Indigenous Australians aged 6 months to 64 years who are at risk of severe outcomes from seasonal influenza, such as those with chronic conditions, including cardiac disease, cystic fibrosis, diabetes and renal failure (see the *Australian Immunisation Handbook*, 9th edition, p.190-191, for more information); and
- Pregnant women.

Advice from the Australian Technical Advisory Group on Immunisation (ATAGI) about the **interaction between seasonal and pandemic influenza vaccines** is available at http://www.emergency.health.nsw.gov.au/swineflu/resources/pdf/ATAGI_vaccination_schedules.pdf

The pandemic influenza strain (H1N1) is likely to be the main circulating strain this Winter and the pandemic influenza vaccine (Panvax®) is **now available** for free for all people aged 6 months and older. More information is available at the NSW Health H1N1 influenza 09 website at http://www.emergency.health.nsw.gov.au/swineflu/vaccination/swine_flu_latest_data.asp