

**Medical Director's Report
Board of Health
April 2010**

General Activities

- Attended Bioterrorism Committee Meeting March 16th.
- *Medical Examiner Program*: Generated a letter regarding the proposal on the State government's side to move the Medical Examiner Program funding from Article VI State Aid to the Division of Criminal Justice Services. Letter was in opposition to this action for the following reasons:
 1. Shifting the funding in administration of the work would mean that the Health Department would no longer be overseeing the Medical Examiner Program. Oversight would probably fall to the District Attorney or the County Administrator's office. Given that most of the Medical Examiner work is not criminally related, but is in fact more in line with public health issues, this would potentially cause an issue in terms of communications. In addition, the funding and the administration of it might be affected in unpredictable ways if done by an agency which is not aligned with the primary considerations of public health.
 2. In cases where criminal issues are raised, the current system of the office residing in the Health Department is an unbiased medical home and this avoids any potential conflict of interest in cases which involve a death in the prison or jail system or at the hands of police officers or county personnel.
 3. The medical home within the Health Department also helps in the collaboration with individual practitioners, hospitals, and nursing homes which may be sources of deaths that need investigation.

For these reasons, I issued my letter of opposition.

- *Influenza-like illness*: H1N1 vaccine continues to be freely available and continues to be dispensed to persons who have not received it so far. No changes in recommendations with regard to influenza illness have been issued by the CDC or the State Health Department.

Summary for year-to-date:

Total number of deaths reported in NYS outside of New York City since September 1, 2009 is 68. Those since April 24, 2009 totaled 94.

Non-H1N1 flu – no deaths as of March 13th and the level of flu activity is low and has been low.

This is also true nationally. As of March 13th, all sub-typed Influenza-A viruses reported to the CDC are 2009 Influenza-A H1N1 viruses.

Comment: The drop-off in influenza-like illness occurred in between weeks 45 and 49 of 2009. That correlates with about the second week of December. Since week 51, the level has been static at very, very low levels.

Continued vaccination with H1N1 vaccine for the population is being recommended due to the predicted possibility of a further outbreak occurring in the spring/summer of this year.

- Reviewed in detail a nursing procedure and policy regarding the brand name Zoll – life vest external defibrillator, making recommendations for changes.
- Also reviewed a nursing nutritional assessment policy and procedure, making modifications.
- Also reviewed immunization records on immigrants and other assorted orders and policies.

New Pneumococcal Vaccine for Children

A 13-component Pneumococcal vaccine is being made available to replace the former 7-component vaccine. The data indicated a significant success with the 7-component vaccine which was introduced in 2000. It dropped the incidence of pneumococcal bacteria disease amongst children less than five years by 76 percent. However, a particular type of pneumococcal bacteria increased in its prevalence after the introduction of this vaccine. Due to this factor and others, the 13-component vaccine was created and now is generally available.

In the near future, vaccination will be switched completely to this new 13-component vaccine which will further help to cut down on problems with this bacterium which causes invasive disease invading the bloodstream, meningitis, as well as pneumonia, and ear infections.

...child or young adulthood and then erupts out along a particular sensory nerve to cause Zoster later in their life when their immunity for some reason wanes and allows the virus to re-replicate. The vaccine is intended to boost immunity and reduce the chance of outbreak.