



6 May 2010, 1200 hrs

TEMPORARY SUSPENSION OF WA PAEDIATRIC (6 MONTHS TO 5 YEARS) SEASONAL INFLUENZA VACCINE PROGRAM

Urgent Request For Information From Immunisation Providers

KEY POINTS

- The investigation into the apparent increase in adverse events associated with trivalent influenza vaccine in children aged 5 years and under is continuing.
- Due to current practice software issues in transferring data to ACIR, crucial information regarding the number of children vaccinated and types and batches of influenza vaccines used is unavailable.
- General Practitioners and other immunization providers are asked to provide information regarding the number of children vaccinated from 8 March to 23 April 2010, by age group, vaccine brand and batch, as per the attached table.

Dear Doctor / Immunisation Provider

The WA Department of Health (WA DoH), in cooperation with the Therapeutic Goods Administration (TGA), is continuing to investigate the apparent increase in febrile reactions, including febrile convulsions, associated with the seasonal influenza vaccine in young children in 2010.

One of the major deficiencies in interpreting the data is the lack of reliable information on numbers of children vaccinated, including the brand and batch of vaccine used. This has arisen because of problems with the transfer of influenza vaccination data from practice software systems to the ACIR. Better data on total numbers of children vaccinated and the brands/batches used will allow calculation of rates of adverse events, and a clearer determination as to whether the risk is truly elevated compared to expectation (e.g. relative to the 2008 and 2009 WA programs and international experience), and whether any increase is specific to a particular vaccine brand or batch used.

You may have already received an email from Helen Moore, Principal Network Adviser for Immunisation, Australian General Practice Network, via your GP Division on 5 May 2010, requesting assistance in helping the investigation by re-sending childhood influenza vaccination details to ACIR.

Because uncertainty remains as to how effective the ACIR upload approach may be, WA DoH would be very grateful if you could also complete the attached form, indicating numbers of children vaccinated with a trivalent influenza vaccine between the dates of 8 March and 23 April 2010, by age group, vaccine brand and batch. This information will also help to clarify how well influenza vaccination data entered in practice software systems is being transferred to ACIR.

We very much appreciate your assistance in providing this information, which will help resolve remaining questions, and facilitate a final decision on resumption of the program.

Please complete the attached form and return to the Communicable Diseases Control Directorate on fax 9388 4877 or email to Panvax.GP@health.wa.gov.au by 5 p.m., Monday 10 May 2010. If you have any queries, please phone 9388 4863 during business hours.

Many thanks

Dr Paul Armstrong
DIRECTOR, Communicable Disease Control Directorate