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To: Primary Care Teams, Health Professionals

From: Rayoni Keith, Manager, Immunisation

Subject: **Coverage update, Gardasil 9 supplies postponed, Hepatitis B vaccine, Mumps, Pertussis.**

Coverage update from Dr Pat Tuohy

We are already at the end of the first quarter of 2017/18. Thanks to the commitment to immunisation demonstrated across the sector, we are now starting to see a slow reversal of the decline in infant immunisation coverage observed in the first 6 months of 2017. Immunisation coverage at the end of this quarter was 92.3 percent at age eight months.

We know that some families are taking longer to make a decision about immunisation than they did previously and may be seeking more information to understand the different points of view that are being shared in media and social media. We want the doors to be open for these conversations and will continue to promote immunisation through a variety of channels to reach parents of young children. Are there other ways that your practice can encourage people to ask questions about immunisation – especially the challenging ones?

Gardasil 9 supplies postponed to General Practices

There will be limited supply of Gardasil 9 (HPV) vaccine until late November 2017. The shortage is due to multiple factors, including demand exceeding the forecast uptake for the vaccine during 2017, and a delay to the scheduled arrival of new stock into New Zealand as a result of global supply constraints. Until the release of new stock in late November, distribution of the remaining stock will be limited to school based programmes only. Distribution to general practices and other vaccinators has been postponed until new stock is available.

Many people who received their first or second HPV dose in general practices in early 2017 will be due for their final dose in the coming weeks. The Ministry recommends practices carefully manage your existing stocks and defer recalls until supplies resume. Delaying a final vaccine dose by a few weeks is unlikely to affect the protection it offers.

Hepatitis B Vaccine (Adult) 10 mcg

Stock of Hepatitis B Adult vaccine (Recombivax HB 10mcg/1ml) is now available at all ProPharma branches. This brand is a temporary replacement for HBvaxPRO 10mcg/1ml which is out of stock. Recombivax HB comes as a prefilled syringe and is in a 10 pack.

The paediatric HBvaxPRO 5mcg/0.5ml and HBvaxPRO 40mcg/1ml vaccines remain in stock.

Mumps

In the past 13 months between 1 September 2016 and 27 September 2017 there have been over 580 confirmed or probable cases of mumps reported nationally. Close to 350 of these cases have presented in the past three months. Seventy percent of the cases are between 10 and 29 years of age.

Cases have been reported in 16 DHBs from across New Zealand, with 75% of the cases reported in the Auckland region.

Primary and secondary care providers should ensure **all** their staff (including reception and administration) are immune (two recorded doses of MMR for anyone born from 1 January 1969) and that hand sanitiser and face masks are available for use by the public at reception.

Primary care should check and offer MMR immunisation for all patients who are susceptible, and record vaccination on the NIR. Teenagers and young adults are at particularly high risk. This is

particularly important for people from Pacific and Asian countries that only offer measles and rubella vaccine (MR) not MMR, i.e. Fiji, Japan, Kiribati, Nauru, Papua New Guinea, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu, and Vanuatu as well as some areas of China.

Primary care and travel health should ensure pre-travel advice includes checking MMR protection. If in doubt, vaccinate. There are no safety concerns around receiving an extra dose of MMR vaccine, and it is **free** for anyone who needs it.

Auckland Regional Public Health Service continues to request that Auckland GPs and primary care services recall patients who do not have two recorded doses of MMR vaccine and to provide opportunistic MMR vaccination where appropriate. Babies under the age of 15 months can have their first MMR immunisations at 12 months. For further information see: www.arphs.govt.nz/managing-the-mumps-outbreak.

Pertussis

Between 16 September and 13 October 2017, there were 165 cases of pertussis notified across New Zealand (110 confirmed, 50 probable and five suspected cases). This is a significant increase on the 94 cases reported in the same four weeks in 2016.

Given the increase in pertussis cases and the likelihood of moving into the next pertussis epidemic soon we request that general practices continue to be vigilant regarding the following:

1. **Discuss** pertussis immunisation with parents and pregnant women. Immunisation of pregnant women in the last trimester of pregnancy and on-time immunisation of babies at 6 weeks, 3 months and 5 months offers the best protection from pertussis to infants as they are at the highest risk of severe disease and death. Pertussis immunisation is recommended but not funded for close contacts of newborns eg fathers and grandparents.
2. **Consider pertussis** in patients with paroxysmal cough and especially those children attending local primary schools or early childhood centres.
3. **Take a nasopharyngeal swab** for pertussis PCR if paroxysmal cough < 3 weeks and not already linked to another case.
4. **Advise** suspect cases to stay away from school, work, other institution, and social interaction and public events while waiting for the laboratory results and while infectious.
5. **Notify** your local public health unit on suspicion.
6. **Immunise** all staff in your practice who may be in contact with patients, with a booster dose of Tdap vaccine every 10 years, and record it on the NIR.
7. **Protect** patients who are at risk of severe illness or complications from pertussis (eg those with chronic respiratory or cardiac conditions, or who are immunocompromised).

Further information on pertussis is available at www.health.govt.nz/your-health/conditions-and-treatments/diseases-and-illnesses/whooping-cough and www.health.govt.nz/system/files/documents/publications/cd-manual-pertussis-may2012.pdf

Varicella introduction evaluation survey

In early to mid-November, consultancy firm Allen + Clarke (on behalf of the Ministry) will be carrying out an online survey of vaccinators to understand what has worked well with the introduction of the varicella vaccine in July, and what can be improved for future changes to the National Immunisation Schedule. You will receive a link to participate in this survey via your local immunisation coordinator. The survey will take about 15 minutes to complete. We would really appreciate your help in completing this survey so that we can learn and improve for future Schedule changes.

If you have any queries about anything in this update, please email immunisation@moh.govt.nz