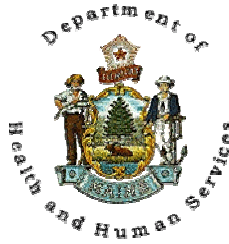


John Elias Baldacci
Governor



John R. Nicholas
Commissioner

Maine Department of Health and Human Services

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The Division of Disease Control

Memorandum

To: Patrick Mc Connor, Executive Director, CSTE
From: Kathleen F. Gensheimer, MD, MPH, State Epidemiologist, Maine
Subject: Influenza Consultancy: 2004 National Influenza Vaccine Summit
Date: August 2, 2004

Beginning in 2001, the American Medical Association and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) have co-sponsored an annual Influenza Summit meetings. Attendance at these meetings was, and remains, by invitation. CSTE has always been invited to participate in the Summit. The participation list continues to expand to include important stakeholders that were not present at previous Summits. The National Influenza Summit is now acknowledged as an integral partnership of stakeholders available to advise on and respond to issues of influenza vaccines year round.

The 2003 National Influenza Summit featured participation from over 97 persons representing organizational stakeholders in influenza vaccine research, production, distribution, public health and administrators who discussed important issues related to influenza vaccine so as to achieve the 2010 goals for influenza vaccine acceptance. Additionally, throughout the year, the Summit participants continue to collaborate to lend their efforts to address barriers that may reduce influenza vaccinations that range from addressing payment problems, to communicating nationally on the benefits of vaccination and to create tools to facilitate the provision of vaccine.

This year's Summit reviewed the 2003-04 influenza season and influenza vaccine production, distribution and reallocation. Breakout groups addressed the following three issues: influenza

vaccine production, distribution and reallocation; influenza vaccine recommendations and vaccine administration and influenza prevention.

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The following recommendations resulted from Summit participants:

- Extend the influenza season from seasonal to year round. Such a change would affect both surveillance and vaccine distribution. Such a move would enhance vaccine demand, supply and enhanced response.
- Universal vaccination versus a tiered system approach with a universal message which is concise, easy to understand and very simple and clear.
- Influenza is everyone's disease and both the public and the health care community need to actively accept and promote influenza vaccine.
- Policies and recommendations for influenza vaccine will ultimately drive influenza vaccine demand, which will push manufacturers to produce more vaccine on an annual basis.
- The above annual efforts will ultimately place the nation in a better position to respond to a pandemic influenza threat.

I was a bit concerned about the zeal that some of the community advocates brought to the process, and hope that in the end, the science supporting vaccine recommendations will not be ignored, but rather, that scientists, epidemiologists and community advocates can all collaborate together to ultimately promote universal influenza vaccination. But until that time, we will need science and an evaluative process to demonstrate the cost effectiveness of the above recommendations to those who are responsible for policies and fiscal decisions.

I was pleased to represent CSTE at the Summit and advocate that we continue to support this important endeavor and to promote Summit recommendations.