

本署檔號 Our Ref. : (26) in DH SEB CD/8/27/6/5

29 July 2013

Dear Doctor,

**The Scientific Committee Recommendations on
Seasonal Influenza Vaccination for the 2013/14 Season**

I am pleased to inform you that the Scientific Committee on Vaccine Preventable Diseases (SCVPD) has updated the recommendations for seasonal influenza vaccination in the coming 2013/14 influenza season.

Given influenza vaccines are safe and effective and that serious influenza infection can occur even in healthy individuals, the SCVPD recommends that seasonal influenza vaccination is suitable for personal protection against clinical influenza for **all persons** except those with known contraindications. Members of the public can consult their family doctors on seasonal influenza vaccination for personal protection.

In addition, based on a range of scientific considerations taking into account local disease burden and international experience, the SCVPD also recommended certain target groups to have higher priority. The target groups recommended in the 2012/13 season will continue to be included as target groups for influenza vaccination in the 2013/14 season.

Recommendations on the target groups for seasonal influenza vaccination are summarised below:



- Pregnant women
- Elderly persons living in residential care homes
- Long-stay residents of institutions for the disabled
- Persons aged 50 years or above
- Persons with chronic medical problems*
- Health care workers
- Children aged 6 months to 5 years
- Poultry workers
- Pig farmers and pig-slaughtering industry personnel

Among the above recommended target groups, pregnant women shall have the highest priority for vaccination. This is based on current evidence which suggests that seasonal influenza vaccination in pregnancy is both safe and effective for the pregnant women and their newborns and there is substantial risk of severe disease and death from influenza among pregnant women.

The SCVPD also recommends all health care workers to receive seasonal influenza vaccination in order to reduce influenza morbidity. It could also reduce the risk of transmitting influenza to patients who are at high risk of complications and mortality from influenza. Therefore, you and your health care staff are highly encouraged to receive seasonal influenza vaccination in the coming season. In addition, we would also like to seek your assistance to encourage the other target groups to receive the vaccination.

To ensure adequate supply of influenza vaccines, you may wish to consider vaccine procurement early. Concerted efforts from both private and public sectors are needed for successful implementation of the SCVPD's recommendations and your continuous support is highly appreciated.

*People with chronic medical problems mainly refer to those who have chronic cardiovascular (except hypertension without complication), lung, metabolic or kidney diseases, obesity (BMI \geq 30), who are immunocompromised, children and adolescents (aged 6 months to 18 years) on long-term aspirin therapy, and those with chronic neurological conditions that can compromise respiratory function or the handling of respiratory secretions or that can increase the risk for aspiration or those who lack the ability to take care for themselves.

Finally, the following health advice for influenza is pertinent besides vaccination:

- To build up good body immunity by having a proper diet, regular exercise and adequate rest, reducing stress and avoiding smoking;
- To maintain good personal hygiene, and wash hands after sneezing, coughing or cleaning nose; and
- To wear a mask if having symptoms of respiratory infection.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'S K Chuang', written in a cursive style.

(Dr S K CHUANG)

for Controller, Centre for Health Protection
Department of Health