NEWS UPDATE – 1 – 10 March 2014

Objective 1: increase in seasonal vaccine use

El 10 de marzo comenzará la vacunación contra la influenza para el personal de salud pública en Chile
10 Mar 2014 / Cnnchile.com
Tres millones 800 mil dosis de vacunas contra la influenza adquirió el Ministerio de Salud para la campaña 2014. Según lo informado por el subsecretario, doctor Jorge Díaz, la campaña es completamente gratuita para todos los niños de 6 a 23 meses, para los adultos mayores de 65 años, enfermos crónicos y también para las embarazadas desde la semana 13 de gestación.

Nación recibe vacunas antígripales que se distribuirán en todo el país
10 Mar 2014 / Elliberal.com.ar
El jefe de Gabinete y el ministro de Salud de la Nación de Argentina encabezarán la recepción de una partida de vacunas. El total adquirido por el Gobierno nacional para aplicar este año asciende a 9 millones de dosis.

The cost-effectiveness of influenza vaccination in elderly Australians: An exploratory analysis of the vaccine efficacy required
10 March 2014 / Vaccine, Volume 32, Issue 12, Pages 1323-1325
It is important to consider the value for money offered by existing elderly influenza vaccination programs, particularly as doubts persist about the magnitude of the effectiveness of such programs. An informative approach to explore the value of vaccination is to consider what vaccine efficacy would be required for a program to be considered cost-effective. To estimate the cost-effectiveness of the current elderly (65+ years) influenza vaccination program in Australia, we modelled how the hypothetical removal of vaccination would increase current disease burden estimates depending on alternative vaccine efficacy assumptions. The base-case results of the analysis found that the existing elderly vaccination program is likely to be cost-effective (under A$50,000 per quality-adjusted life year gained) if the vaccine efficacy is above ~ 30%. This study offers reassurance that the influenza vaccination of elderly Australians is likely to offer value for money.

Influenza vaccine effectiveness in Spain 2013/14: subtype-specific early estimates using the cycEVA study
6 March 2014 / Eurosurveillance, Volume 19, Issue 9
Adjusted early estimates of the 2013/14 influenza vaccine effectiveness (VE) in Spain for all age groups was 35% (95% CI: −9 to 62), 33% (95% CI: −33 to 67) and 28% (95% CI: −33 to 61) against any influenza virus type, A(H1N1)pdm09 and A(H3N2) viruses, respectively. For the population targeted for vaccination, the adjusted VE was 44% (95% CI: −11 to 72), 36% (95% CI: −64 to 75) and 42% (95% CI: −29 to 74), respectively. These preliminary results in Spain suggest a suboptimal protective effect of the vaccine against circulating influenza viruses.

Interim estimates of 2013/14 influenza clinical severity and vaccine effectiveness in the prevention of laboratory-confirmed influenza-related hospitalisation, Canada, February 2014
6 March 2014 / Eurosurveillance, Volume 19, Issue 9
During the 2013/14 influenza season in Canada, 631 of 654 hospitalisations for laboratory-confirmed influenza enrolled in sentinel hospitals were due to Influenza A. Of the 375 with known subtype, influenza A(H1N1) accounted for 357. Interim unmatched vaccine effectiveness adjusted for age and presence of one or more medical comorbidities was determined by test-negative case-control design to be 58.5% (90% confidence interval (CI): 43.9–69.3%) overall and 57.9% (90% CI: 37.7–71.5) for confirmed influenza A(H1N1).
**Study suggests flu-vaccine rule for day-care kids helped**
6 March 2014 / CIDRAP

Three years after Connecticut started requiring influenza vaccination for children in licensed child-care programs, vaccine coverage in young children was up substantially and their flu-related hospitalization rate was down about 12%, according to a study published today in *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report* (MMWR)

**Employee influenza vaccination in residential care facilities**
March 2014 / American Journal of Infection Control, Vol 42 | No. 3

The organizational literature on infection control in residential care facilities is limited. Using a nationally representative dataset, the study examined the organizational factors associated with implementing at least 1 influenza-related employee vaccination policy/program, as well as the effect of vaccination policies on health care worker (HCW) influenza vaccine uptake in residential care facilities. The study concludes that residential care facilities can improve vaccination rates among employees by adopting effective employee vaccination policies

**The impact of influenza vaccination requirements for hospital personnel in California: Knowledge, attitudes, and vaccine uptake**
March 2014 / American Journal of Infection Control, Vol 42 | No. 3

Seasonal influenza infections are a leading cause of illness, death, and lost productivity. Vaccinating health care personnel (HCP) can reduce transmission of influenza virus to patients and reduce influenza-related absenteeism, enabling the health care system to meet elevated demand for care during influenza outbreaks. The results of the study suggest that state-level vaccination requirements such as those enacted by California, may not be sufficient to increase uptake among hospital HCP.

**Objective 2: increase in vaccine production capacity**

n/a

**Objective 3: research and development**

**Do Flu Shots Cause Runny Noses?**
3 March 2014 / Science Mag (USA)

Influenza vaccines save millions of lives across the globe each year, but even heroes have their faults. A live attenuated flu vaccine, which contains weakened versions of the influenza virus, makes mice more prone to bacterial infections in their nasal passages. The vaccine used in the study is similar to FluMist, of which 13 million doses were distributed in the United States this year. The work helps explain why runny noses were an occasional aftereffect of FluMist in clinical trials.

**Outbreak news**

**Pandemic potential of emerging influenza**
Mar 2014 / The Lancet Infectious Diseases, Volume 14, Number 3

In January this year, the first case of highly pathogenic avian influenza H5N1 was detected in the Americas when a Canadian man returning from Beijing fell ill and subsequently died. January also saw a sharp upturn in the number of cases of H7N9 avian influenza in China with 169 cases detected in 1 month, compared with 144 up to the end of last year since it was first identified in March 2013. Another familiar virus, 2009 pandemic influenza A H1N1 has also been hitting the headlines in Egypt, where there have been over 300 cases and around 38 deaths since December, and in Mexico over 400 deaths have been associated with H1N1 this year.
Ontario study: 2009 H1N1 highest in minorities
1 March 2014 / BMC Public Health
Adults in Ontario who contracted 2009 H1N1 flu (pH1N1) during the 2009-10 pandemic were more likely to be black or Asian, and black kids had six times the risk white kids had of contracting the disease, according to a new study in *BMC Public Health*.

Pandemic influenza A H1N1 vaccines and narcolepsy: vaccine safety surveillance in action
Mar 2014 / The Lancet Infectious Diseases, Volume 14, Number 3
The 2009 influenza A H1N1 pandemic placed unprecedented demand on public health authorities and the vaccine industry. Efforts were coordinated internationally to maximise the speed of vaccine development, distribution, and delivery, and the European Union’s novel fast-track authorisation procedures mandated increased postmarketing surveillance to monitor vaccine safety. Clinicians in Finland and Sweden later identified an apparent increase in the incidence of narcolepsy associated with a specific adjuvanted pandemic influenza vaccine.

Cambodian boy dies from H5N1 infection
7 March 2014 / Cambodian health ministry/WHO
A 3-year-old Cambodian boy has died from an H5N1 avian influenza infection, the country's sixth case this year, according to a joint statement today from the country's health ministry and the World Health Organization (WHO).

Cambodia reports 2 more new human cases of bird flu
28 February 2014 / Xinhua (China)
Two girls, 10 and 11 years old, from the same Cambodian province have tested positive for H5N1 avian flu, according to a news release yesterday from the country's Ministry of Health (MOH) and the WHO.

China reports 3 more H7N9 cases, 1 fatal
5 March 2014 / CIDRAP
China today reported three more H7N9 influenza cases in as many provinces, one of which was fatal, plus another death in a previously reported case. Chinese government and media reports on the cases were translated and posted by FluTrackers, an infectious disease message board.

China reports four H7N9 deaths, one new
3 March 2014 / CIDRAP
Over the past 3 days China reported one new H7N9 infection, which killed a man from Guangdong province, along with three other fatalities that involved previously reported illnesses. Many of the patients sickened by H7N9 have severe pneumonia and can spend weeks in intensive care units. Though cases in the second wave of H7N9 appear to be tapering off, outcomes are often delayed due to the long hospitalizations.