NEWS UPDATE – 17-24 June 2013

Objective 1: increase in seasonal vaccine use

Vaccines as a tool to estimate the burden of severe influenza in children of low-resourced areas (November 30-December 1, 2012, Les Pensieres, Veyrier-du-Lac, France)
Meeting Report / Vaccine, Volume 31, Issue 32, Pages 3207-3308 (11 July 2013) / Pages 3222-3228

Pregnant women urged to get flu vaccine
Mon, 24 Jun 2013 05:53:31 GMT|Blacktown Sun|
Only one in five pregnant women in NSW are getting the free influenza vaccination recommended by health experts, says a recent survey. Research conducted by MotherSafe — a statewide, free counselling service for pregnant women and healthcare providers — has found only 22 per cent of the 320 pregnant women surveyed were getting the jab. The research by MotherSafe will be presented at the International Conference of the Organisation of Teratogen Information Specialists in the USA this month.

ACIP recommends flu vaccine option for those with egg allergies
Thu, 20 Jun 2013 10:51:43 GMT|CIDRAP|
Federal vaccine advisors today voted in favor of recommending a newly approved recombinant flu vaccine for adults age 18 through 49 who have an egg allergy, regardless of severity.
Also at Boston Globe: Severe egg allergy? There's now a flu shot for you
Thu, 20 Jun 2013 20:26:31 GMT|Boston.com|

Influenza Illness and Hospitalizations Averted by Influenza Vaccination in the United States, 2005-2011
Deliana Kostova, Carrie Reed, Lyn Finelli, Po-Yung Cheng, Paul M. Gargiullo, David K. Shay, James A. Singleton, Martin I. Meltzer, Peng-jun Lu, Joseph S. Bresee
Research Article | published 19 Jun 2013 | PLOS ONE 10.1371/journal.pone.0066312
The study concludes influenza vaccination programs in the US produce a substantial health benefit in terms of averted cases, clinic visits and hospitalizations. Our results underscore the potential for additional disease prevention through increased vaccination coverage, particularly among nonelderly adults, and increased vaccine effectiveness, particularly among the elderly.
Also at Flu Vaccine Prevented 13 Million Illnesses Over 6 Years
Thu, 20 Jun 2013 10:51:43 GMT|Huffington Post|

CDC reports US influenza activity, new vaccine strains
Tue, 18 Jun 2013 00:00:00 GMT|Medscape|
Influenza A (H3N2), influenza A (H1N1)pdm09, and influenza B viruses cocirculated during the 2012 to 2013 US influenza season, according to surveillance data published online in the June 14 issue of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s (CDC’s) Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report. Two cases of variant influenza A infection, both H3N2v, were also reported.

Outbreak news

Taiwan reports first human H6N1 infection
Fri, 21 Jun 2013|CIDRAP|
Health authorities in Taiwan today announced the first known human infection with H6N1 avian influenza, in a 20-year-old woman who was sick with pneumonia in May and has since recovered.
Ten years after the emergence in China of the severe acute respiratory syndrome, an avian influenza A (H7N9) virus has emerged there, causing substantial disease. But China is now better prepared to address emerging infectious diseases and potential pandemics.

Researchers with the Network Dynamics and Simulation Science Laboratory at the Virginia Bioinformatics Institute have revealed new information about the latest strain of type A influenza, known as H7N9, in a report in the journal *PLOS Currents: Outbreaks*.

The US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) on Jun 14 deactivated its Emergency Operations Center (EOC) response to the novel H7N9 flu outbreak in China, the agency said today in a Twitter post.

Following the recent release of a new pandemic alert system, the World Health Organization (WHO) today posted a notice that said the current phase for H5N1 avian influenza is "alert," the second notch on its four-tiered system.

Thailand and Laos have stepped up bilateral cooperation on practical responses to any possible outbreak of the new deadly A (H7N9) strain of avian influenza, the Thai News Agency reported.