Dear Colleagues

National Guidelines for Vaccine Storage and Distribution 2012
The recently updated National Guidelines for Vaccine Storage and Distribution 2012 confirms the need for all immunisation providers to store vaccines in vaccine fridges to comply with World Health Organization cold chain best practice.

The guidelines are available at www.health.govt.nz/national-guidelines-vaccine-storage

During the Meningococcal B Immunisation Programme roll out in 2004, the Ministry provided a one-off quality improvement payment to district health boards (based on $3000 per practice) for their PHOs as contribution towards their primary care practices' costs in managing the cold chain, including purchase of vaccine fridges if required. These fridges had an average life expectancy of eight-to-ten years.

There is no central funding available for purchase of replacement fridges, however the Ministry is prepared to run a bulk procurement tender on behalf of the sector to achieve a better bulk purchasing price if this is helpful.

This proposal will be raised through PSAAP to gauge the sector’s interest in the Ministry identifying a bulk purchase vaccine fridge deal.

Pharmaceutical refrigerators require regular maintenance to decrease the risk of breakdown (follow manufacturer’s recommendations). These refrigerators also need to be defrosted if there is any ice build-up. Please contact the manufacturer if either a minus sign comes up on the digital display on the control panel and/or an alarm sounds.

More children protected from infectious diseases
The Minister of Health recently announced the latest quarterly results for the Government’s Health Targets. These show immunisation rates continue to increase with 93 per cent of all two-year-old children now fully immunised.

The Minister goes on to say in a media release: “There is virtually no difference in the rates between ethnicities or family income. In fact, immunisation rates for the richest families are the same as our poorest families. This is one of the most significant public health achievements of the past 10 years. Immunisation is one of the most effective interventions to prevent against infectious diseases.”

Thank you for the role you have played in protecting children from infectious diseases.

Meningococcal Disease - Hajj Pilgrims
The Hajj (pilgrimage to Mecca) is expected to fall this year between 24-29 October 2012. Because outbreaks of meningococcal disease have occurred previously during the Hajj, the Saudi Ministry of Health now requires all pilgrims to be immunised with a quadrivalent meningococcal vaccine at least 10 days before the Hajj (and within the past three years), and Hajj visas cannot be issued without proof of vaccination. The immunisation status of anyone planning to take part in the pilgrimage should be fully reviewed to ensure they are
up to date with all vaccinations including MMR, tetanus and hepatitis B. Influenza, hepatitis A and typhoid immunisations are also recommended.

More information can be found at the following websites:

All people travelling overseas should be reminded about the importance of being immunised with routine vaccines, in addition to considering any special health advice. Outbreaks of vaccine preventable diseases continue to occur in many countries.

Newborn Pre-Enrolment Toolkit and Instructional Video


The toolkit provides a step-by-step guide for providers on the newborn pre-enrolment process and includes information about how it will work in Houston, Intrahealth, MedTech and MyPractice Practice Management Systems (PMS).

An instructional video will also be available on the Ministry of Health's website from Monday 1 October 2012. If general practices wish to pre-enrol newborns, they will need to upgrade to the latest version of their PMS.

The help desk numbers for the PMS vendors are listed below should you wish to ask for advice about upgrading your PMS or about how the preliminary newborn enrolment process will work in your PMS.

Houston Medical: 0800 401 111
Intrahealth Systems: 0508 300 900
MedTech: 0800 2 MEDTECH (0800 2 633 832)
My Practice: 0800 MYPRACTICE (0800 69 7722 8423)

2012 Seasonal Influenza Programme

The Immunisation team would like to remind all practices that funded vaccine claims need to be submitted within eight months from the date the patient received the influenza vaccine. Funded vaccines eligible for payment must be administered within the subsided period. This includes children receiving their second dose of Fluarix. If the second dose is administered after 31 August 2012, it cannot be claimed for.

Any queries regarding payment please contact Sector Services on 0800 458 448.

If you have any queries about anything in this GP Fax, please email immunisation@moh.govt.nz. You can also follow the Ministry on Twitter: twitter.com/minhealthnz for updates.