Dear Colleagues

Whooping Cough (Pertussis) - a reminder about encouraging on-time vaccination
In the last month all district health boards have reported pertussis cases with the highest numbers to 26 October, being notified from Canterbury (94) and Capital and Coast (47). With pertussis continuing at high rates, please keep encouraging on time vaccination in your region to protect infants.

Since the current outbreak began in August 2011, there have been a total of 6096 cases (confirmed, probable and suspect) and 323 hospitalisations. Infants (under one-year-old) have the highest risk of serious outcomes and have accounted for 403 cases (7 percent) and 194 of all hospitalisations (60 percent). One death has occurred in a three-year-old unimmunised child with underlying health conditions.

Pertussis vaccine during pregnancy
As outlined in the June 2012 GP Fax, the Ministry confirms the advice in the Immunisation Handbook 2011 (page 24) that BOOSTRIX® vaccine can be used in pregnancy.

Giving the vaccine during pregnancy has been recommended by the Immunisation Technical Forum (a national expert advisory committee) who have considered the international evidence in this area, including the updated ACIP advice published last October. ¹

Immunisation is recommended when there are high rates of pertussis circulating in the community, as there are currently. In pregnancy, immunisation is recommended, but not currently funded, after 20 weeks gestation. It may result in increased immunity in the newborn infant, as well as in the mother.

PHARMAC is currently considering an application for pertussis boosters for pregnant women as an eligibility change to the National Immunisation Schedule.

Boostrix single doses not available
Due to increased demand, the single dose Boostrix (Tdap) vaccine is currently out of stock. The Boostrix vaccine is only available in the 10-dose pack and we ask that you use this vaccine for those eligible for funded booster doses on the National Immunisation Schedule that is, 11-year-old children. DHBs funding the vaccine for pregnant women can purchase it directly from HealthCare Logistics.

Meningococcal disease - a reminder about early recognition and treatment
As at 1 November 2012, there have been a total of 74 reported cases of meningococcal disease (probable and confirmed). This compares to 108 cases over the same period last year, and is the lowest recorded number in this period since 1997. Over the same period there have been five deaths from meningococcal disease, including two deaths in October.

These deaths are a reminder to clinicians of the importance of early recognition of the symptoms of meningococcal disease to enable prompt treatment.

Ordering manual claim forms for immunisation benefit
Manual claim forms are available free from Wickliffe Ltd on 0800 259 138 with provision of your payee number. Claims may be submitted manually to Immunisation claims if written approval has been supplied by the funding DHB. Send all completed claim forms to: Immunisation claims, Sector Services, PO Box 1026 Wellington 6140

Manual claim forms should only be used in exceptional circumstances such as re-immunisation following cancer treatment or if a claim was more than eight months old.

Impact of recording pneumococcal vaccine on the NIR datamart milestone age reports

From 1 July 2012, pneumococcal vaccine is included in the NIR datamart milestone age reports. Since the introduction of pneumococcal vaccine to the Schedule it has not been included in NIR reported coverage rates. With pneumococcal vaccine now included in coverage reporting, two-year-old coverage may fluctuate between 1-2 percent lower than previous coverage rates. A practice that achieved 95 percent coverage last year will not be able to achieve 95 percent this year if parents in their community decline pneumococcal vaccine.

Please ensure that families who have previously declined or delayed pneumococcal vaccine are offered further information and a reminder about the benefits of being immunised against pneumococcal disease. The Health Education resource “Childhood Immunisation” includes information about pneumococcal vaccine: https://www.healthed.govt.nz/resource/childhood-immunisation#pneum. The Ministry will develop a pneumococcal disease brochure for Immunisation Week 2013.

Synflorix vaccine package change
GlaxoSmithKline Ltd has changed the packaging of their pneumococcal conjugate vaccine Synflorix. The new packaging will be distributed from the ProPharma Regional Stores in late November/December. The new packaging is smaller and more secure than the current pack, and is environmentally friendly.

Synflorix is offered on the National Immunisation Schedule at six weeks, three, five and 15 months of age. There are no changes to the Synflorix vaccine formulation, indications or components. Please use up your existing stocks of Synflorix before using the new packs. If you have any questions please contact Kate McLellan, Senior Vaccines Business Manager, GlaxoSmithKline Ltd on 021 968 061 or email kate.e.mclellan@gsk.com.

National Cold Chain Audit TagAlert® monitors and record cards
A TagAlert® monitor, record card and pre-paid addressed envelope are issued with deliveries of some National Immunisation Schedule vaccines, including Infanrix®-hexa, Synflorix®, Act-HIB™, M-M-R® II, Infanrix®-IPV, Boostrix®, Gardasil® and ADT™ Booster. Deliveries containing the TagAlert are identified by a yellow sticker. Once the last vaccine dose in the box containing a TagAlert® monitor and record card is administered, return the Tag Alert and record card as soon as possible to ESR in the pre-paid addressed envelope.

More information about the National Cold Chain Audit, including frequently asked questions and a quick guide to reading the TagAlert can be found in the National Guidelines for Vaccine Storage and Distribution 2012 at http://www.health.govt.nz/national-guidelines-vaccine-storage. Your local immunisation coordinator can also help.

Td/Tdap
Please be aware there is no minimum interval required between previous Tetanus diphtheria (Td) immunisation and a subsequent Tetanus, diphtheria and pertussis (Tdap) immunisation. Therefore the National Immunisation Schedule 11-year-old Tdap booster should not be delayed after a prior dose of Td. http://www.immune.org.nz/sites/default/files/resources/AdministrationTdapQA20120613V04Final.pdf

Age eligibility for funded vaccines
Under the Ministry of Health’s and Disability Services Eligibility Direction 2011, a child is defined as a person who is under 18-years-old. For immunisation, this means that children who are under 18 are eligible for all funded National Immunisation Schedule immunisations. This also includes refugee and migrant children. Please refer to section B10 of the Health and Disability Services Eligibility Direction 2011 (link below).


Newborn Pre-Enrolment
To pre-enrol newborns, General Practices will need to have installed the latest version of their PMS. Contact your vendor to find out about upgrading your PMS, or about how the preliminary newborn enrolment process works in your PMS. Contact details are as follows: Houston Medical: 0800 401 111; Intrahealth Systems: 0508 300 900; MedTech: 0800 2 MEDTECH (0800 2 633 852); My Practice: 0800 MYPRACTICE (0800 697 722 8423).

If you have any queries about anything in this update, please email immunisation@moh.govt.nz.