

**INFORMATION PAPER**  
**ON**  
**Management of the 2020-2021 DoD Influenza Vaccine Program Amid Late Season Delivery Schedule and COVID-19**

**ISSUE:**

- The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) states that there will likely be concurrent viral activity of influenza and SARS-CoV-2, the cause of COVID-19, during the 2020-2021 influenza season
- Forty-two percent (1.4M doses) of the 3.4M total influenza vaccine order will not arrive to the Defense Logistics Agency (DLA) until 15 November 2020

**BACKGROUND:**

- Influenza and SARS-CoV-2 viruses are highly contagious and are spread through droplets carried in the air and by contact with infected surfaces
- The CDC
  - states that a coinfection with influenza and SARS-CoV-2 is possible
  - recommends a Food and Drug Administration (FDA)-approved influenza vaccine for all those over 6 months, with rare exceptions
  - remarks that an influenza vaccine will not protect against SARS-CoV-2
  - does not recommend early receipt of influenza vaccine (i.e. July) for the 2020-2021 influenza season because protection may not last the entire influenza season
- A FDA-approved SARS-CoV-2/COVID-19 vaccine is currently not available
- DLA annually procures 3.3-3.4M doses of influenza vaccine for uniformed personnel, the Reserve Component, and beneficiaries over 6 months of age
  - IAW DLA contracting guidelines, DoD deliverables for influenza vaccine orders are restricted to total quantity required for defined age categories in addition to type of vaccine (pre-filled syringe (PFS) vs multi-dose vial (MDV))
  - A particular manufacturer or product cannot be specified unless it aligns with Advisory Committee for Immunization Practices and CDC recommendations
- Per the 2020-2021 DLA influenza vaccine contract received by DHA on 16 June 2020
  - 1.5M doses (44% of total) are to be delivered to the DLA depot by 11 Sept 2020
  - 500K doses (15% of total) are to be delivered to the DLA depot by 9 Oct 2020
  - 1.4M doses (42% of total) are to be delivered to the DLA depot by 15 Nov 2020
- IAW DoDI 6205.02 DoD Immunization Program, all Active Duty and Selected Reserve (including National Guard) and all health-care personnel working in DoD medical treatment facilities (MTFs) are required to receive the annual seasonal influenza immunization or obtain an exemption (i.e., medical or administrative)
- The DHA Procedural Instruction on the DoD Influenza Vaccine program describes vaccination for Northern Hemisphere (NH) influenza and, new for the 2020 season, vaccination for Southern Hemisphere (SH) influenza
  - Northern hemisphere (NH) influenza season is generally between October and April

- Due to the large volume of vaccine administered, MTFs typically hold mass influenza immunization events for both uniformed personnel and beneficiaries
- Southern hemisphere (SH) influenza season is generally between April and October
  - DoD SH sites received the 2020 FDA-approved SH influenza vaccine in May
  - The FDA-approved SH influenza is not currently available outside of DoD

### **DISCUSSION:**

- It is difficult to estimate COVID-19 impact on the 2020-2021 NH influenza season; however, social distancing and other CDC recommendations have been demonstrated to reduce spread
- DHA has directly engaged with Services, CCMDs, Reserves, NG and CONUS/OCONUS immunization sites since April 2020 to strategize on reducing impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the influenza vaccine program
  - Each of the 1050+ DoD immunization sites has an assigned DHA-Immunization Healthcare Division member to provide timely assistance to unique needs
  - Viable and detailed alternatives to mass immunization events have been disseminated
- The 2020-2021 Influenza vaccine will arrive to DLA later than historical trends
  - There has been no report of national influenza vaccine shortages
  - CENTCOM, USFK, Navy vessels, INDOPACOM, AFRICOM, AFSOC/Pentagon, EUCOM, SOUTHCOM and USCG are Service-designated high priorities. Services are currently evaluating the how best to fulfill supply to these priority groups
  - TRICARE authorizes no-cost influenza vaccine to beneficiaries, including uniformed personnel in the civilian community; however, many civilian immunization sites will not administer vaccine to those under 9 years of age
- Data on receipt of influenza vaccine by beneficiaries is incomplete as those receiving vaccine in the workplace outside of DoD or use insurance besides TRICARE are not captured; however, as in the civilian sector, vaccination is believed to be underutilized
- DoD typically turns in/wastes 300K influenza vaccine doses annually; therefore, increased influenza vaccine demand during the 2020-2021 season may be absorbed
- The 2020 SH influenza vaccine cannot be substituted for 2020-2021 NH influenza vaccine as there is 50% discordance in virus components between the two
- No expected impact of shipments from DLA to MTFs
- No expected impact related to personnel travel
- No impact to influenza vaccine clinical and logistical education and training
- No impact to influenza vaccine documentation or uniformed personnel compliance rates