

CANCELLATION OF OMC FLU VACCINATION PROGRAM-- Joseph Falco, M.D.

As Interim OMC Manager, I am very sorry to have to inform the BNL community that OMC will be unable to provide any flu vaccinations at this time and for the foreseeable future. This year, our pharmaceutical supplier ordered flu vaccine from Chiron Corp., which initially withheld delivery of the flu vaccine, causing us to postpone our "Flu Fair". Chiron has now cancelled shipment due to concerns about contamination of certain vaccine lots. We have placed an order with the only other U.S. flu vaccine manufacturer, Aventis, but we have been placed on a waiting list, and do not know when or how much vaccine will be delivered to us, since a nationwide flu vaccine shortage now exists. The CDC (www.cdc.gov) has recommended that available vaccine be given, on a priority basis, to the following high-risk groups: all children aged 6-23 months, adults aged 65 years and older, persons aged 2-64 years with underlying chronic medical conditions, all women who will be pregnant during influenza season, residents of nursing homes and long-term care facilities, children 6 months-18 years of age on chronic aspirin therapy, health-care workers with direct patient care, and out-of-home caregivers and household contacts of children aged <6 months. If you are in one of these priority groups, you should seek flu vaccination through your personal health care provider. The Suffolk County Department of Health also has vaccination programs for high risk groups, but has informed OMC that they too are running out of vaccine, and have no immediate prospects for resupply. For more information on these programs, go to the Suffolk County web site at www.co.suffolk.ny.us, chose "Health Services" from the "Department" pull down menu. From the Health Services web page, you can access the Senior Citizen/High Risk Adult Immunization Schedule and the Immunization Action Program immunization schedule (for small children). Always call ahead to the indicated phone numbers, as vaccine shortage may result in program cancellations. OMC will make a future Monday Memo announcement if flu vaccine becomes available to OMC.