

September 13, 2024

The Honorable Kathy Hochul
Governor of New York State
NYS State Capitol Building
Albany, NY 12224

Re: A9886, Peoples-Stokes/ S9550, Skoufis relating to increasing eligibility of admitted persons in general hospitals for immunizations against influenza virus

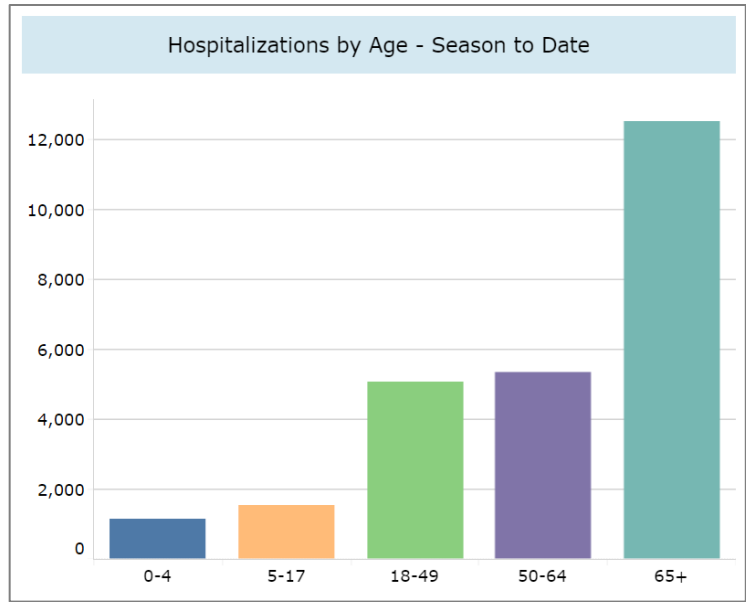
Dear Governor Hochul:

The undersigned organizations, which includes those who collectively formed the [Let's Get Immunized NY](#) campaign four years ago and others, are strongly committed to the reduction of vaccine-preventable illness and improving vaccine access. **For this reason, we respectfully request you sign A9886, Peoples-Stokes into law.**

This legislation would require hospitals in New York to offer the influenza vaccine to all admitted patients (inpatients) over the age of 50. The current requirement applies only to those age 65 and above. Once offered, the patient may choose to accept or decline the vaccine for any reason, which this bill maintains. This legislation would allow more individuals to be offered the flu vaccine when they are already being cared for in a hospital, increasing the likelihood that vulnerable populations are offered and receive the flu vaccine.

The [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#) recognizes that adults aged 50-64 years are among those with the highest incidence of influenza illness. Rates of hospitalization and death due to influenza are also higher in individuals aged 50 and older. Older adults are more likely to have an underlying health condition that may weaken their immune system, increasing their risk for severe illness and complications from influenza. As our state's healthcare system prepares for the continued threat of three highly contagious respiratory infections this fall – influenza, COVID-19, and RSV, we must ensure we are seizing on every opportunity for New Yorkers to protect themselves with immunization against these preventable viruses.

Data made available by the NYS Department of Health shows that influenza cases increased by nearly 20 percent between the 2022-23 and 2023-24 seasons. Flu hospitalization data for New York (right) demonstrates that nearly 70% of all influenza hospitalizations during the previous flu season occurred among individuals aged 50 years and older.



New York State is a national leader in upholding strong vaccination policies that help to ensure New Yorkers are protected from vaccine-preventable illnesses. This legislation dovetails with broader efforts across the state to improve vaccination uptake, especially among vulnerable populations. This change will help protect older adults by offering them an additional opportunity to receive the flu vaccine while receiving inpatient care.

Further, as we work to increase the offering of, and access to recommended vaccines, it is important to also increase reporting of adult vaccines by all vaccine providers to the State and New York City vaccine registries to make them as robust and effective as they are for pediatric vaccines to better identify needs and gaps. This will also prevent duplication for patients who may have already received a vaccine from another provider. We would welcome the opportunity to work with your administration on policies to increase adult vaccine reporting to NY vaccine registries.

As organizations committed to enhancing public health and vaccine access, we appreciate your consideration of this important legislation and ways to strengthen our state's vaccine infrastructure. We thank you for all you have done to encourage New Yorkers to receive recommended vaccines and strongly urge your approval of this legislation.

Respectfully,

American Nurses Association New York

American Society for Meningitis Prevention

Families Fighting Flu

New York Chapter American College of Physicians Services, Inc.

New York State Academy of Family Physicians

New York State Association of County Health Officials

New York State Association of Health Care Providers

New York State Public Health Association

New York State Radiological Society

Nurses Who Vaccinate

The Kimberly Coffey Foundation

The Nurse Practitioner Association New York State