



## Topic: Immunizations

### 31. Older Adult Flu Shots

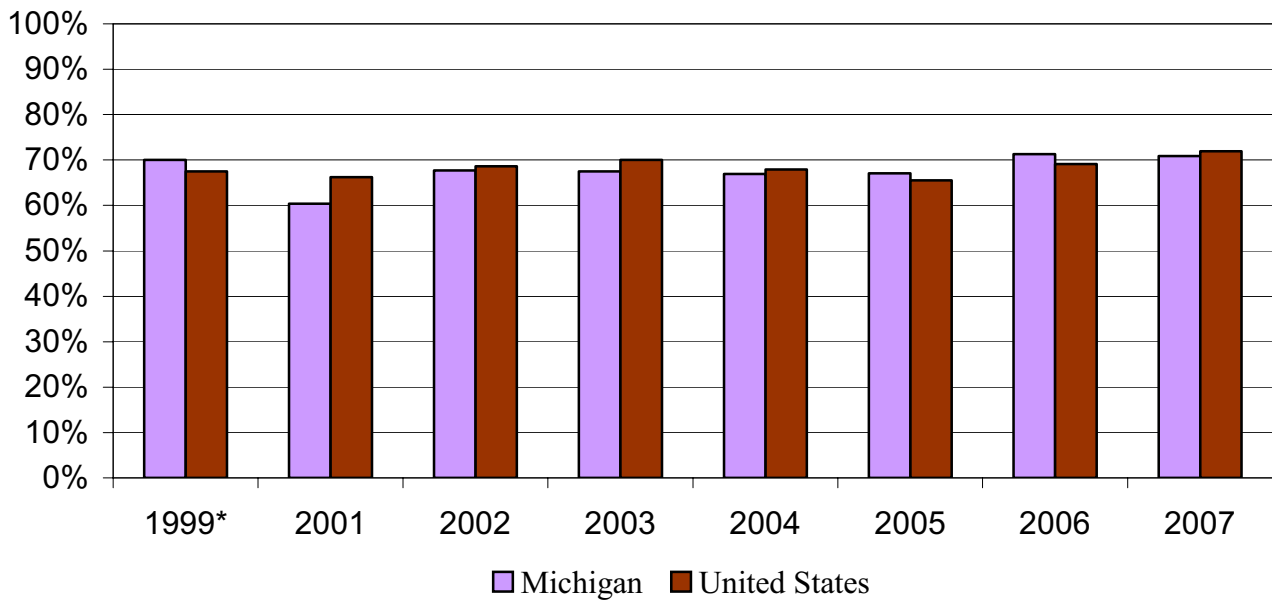
Vaccination programs, traditionally associated with protecting young children from diseases, are increasingly focusing on the lifelong benefits that immunizations bring. One of the greatest public health challenges is extending the success in childhood immunization to the adult population. Illnesses, such as influenza, caused by vaccine-preventable diseases are expensive both in terms of dollars and human lives.

In the United States, billions of dollars are spent annually treating adults for vaccine-preventable illnesses, and each year, on average, about 50,000 adults die from diseases that could have been prevented (1).

Vaccines are available to prevent many potentially debilitating diseases, including influenza, pneumococcal disease, and Hepatitis B virus infection.

#### *How are we doing?*

**Percentage of Adults Age 65+ Who Had Flu Shot in the Past Year**



\*Data was not collected in 2000 on Flu Shots.

Results from the 2007 MI BRFSS indicate that two-thirds (70.9%) of Michigan adults aged 65 years and older were immunized against influenza in the past year. The prevalence of immunization in Michigan among adults 65 years and older has varied over the past eight years with the highest percentage being in 2006 at 71.3% and the lowest in 2001 at 60.4%.

#### *How does Michigan compare with the U.S.?*

Adult immunization rates in Michigan as measured by the BRFSS have remained consistent with those for the United States. For 2007, 70.9% of Michigan adults were immunized, while the U.S. median was slightly higher at 71.9%.



### ***How are different populations affected?***

BRFSS shows that only 58.4% of Blacks aged 65 years or older received an influenza vaccine in the past year compared to 72.3% of Whites. This is similar to the national averages which showed that 57.4% of Blacks compared to 73.8% Whites received an influenza vaccine in the past year.

### ***What is the Department of Community Health doing to improve this indicator?***

The Department continues to coordinate with local health departments to present educational programs focusing on adult immunizations to private provider practices and physician groups. These programs promote adult immunizations and provide guidance on improving adult immunization programs.

The Department distributed articles to a number of professional publications, as well as some publications that are targeted to consumers. For example, an article called “Protect Yourself and Get Vaccinated”, written by a Department staff member, was printed in the Spring 2008 issue of Michigan Generations publication.

Michigan recently expanded the use of the Immunization Registry, now known as the Michigan Care Improvement Registry (MCIR) to help in tracking adult immunizations. Prior to this expansion, the MCIR only held records for individuals younger than 20 years of age. This expansion allows providers to track and assess vaccines for all individuals.

When the Michigan Antibiotic Resistance Reduction Coalition (MARR) created and distributed folders for long-term care facilities, Department staff worked with them in updating the section on vaccination. The Department also contributed 200 copies of a packet addressing tetanus, pneumococcal polysaccharide (PPSV), and influenza vaccines to this effort by MARR.

The Department has developed a multi-pronged approach to seasonal influenza education and outreach. A complete overhaul of the seasonal flu website was undertaken in the summer/early fall of 2008. MDCH staff leads the Flu Advisory Board (FAB), which was formed in 2005 as a result of the flu vaccine shortage. MDCH’s seasonal influenza projects include its flu website at [www.michigan.gov/flu](http://www.michigan.gov/flu), the 2008 seasonal flu slogan and campaign “Flu Vaccine: For Everyone, Every Year,” the Flu Fighter Action Kit for Health Care Personnel at [www.michigan.gov/flufighterkit](http://www.michigan.gov/flufighterkit), FAB’s mission and activities, and the Immunization Nurse Education (INE) flu modules. Staff developed and promoted flu holiday posters, which encourage people to continue to get vaccinated into December and January, and throughout the winter months. The goal of these posters is to facilitate or encourage dialogue between the general public and their health care providers, as recent NFID data shows that 7 out of 10 people would be “likely” or “very likely” to get an annual influenza vaccine if their health care professional recommended it (NFID Influenza/Pneumococcal News Conference 2008).

**Sources:** National Foundation for Infectious Diseases, Bethesda, MD. Immunization: Supporting a Healthier Life Throughout the Lifespan - National Adult Immunization Awareness Week 2008 Campaign Kit.

<http://www.nfid.org/pdf/publications/naiaw08.pdf>