

IMMUNIZATION DISPARITIES FOCUS ON: Seasonal Influenza (Flu)



Flu Facts:

- Flu is a contagious respiratory illness caused by influenza viruses.
- Flu can be a mild to severe illness, and at times can lead to death.
 - On average, more than 200,000 people in the U.S. are hospitalized each year for respiratory and heart conditions associated with influenza virus infections
 - Between 1976 and 2006, an estimated 3,000 - 49,000 people in the U.S. died annually of flu-related causes.
- The best way to prevent the flu is by getting a flu vaccine each year
- Vaccination is recommended for everyone, 6 months of age and older

For more flu facts, go to www.michigan.gov/flu

Flu Vaccination Disparities in Michigan:

Data from the Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS) and National Immunization Survey (NIS).

	White, non-Hispanic % (95% CI*)	Black, non-Hispanic % (95% CI*)	Healthy People 2020 Goal
6 months and over	41.1% (+/- 4.4%)	31.4% (+/- 10.0%)	80%
65 years and over	69.3% (+/- 2.0%)	54.8% (48.5% -60.8%)	90%

*Confidence Interval

Implementing targeted activities to reduce disparities in flu vaccination has been identified as a part of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' National Action Plan to reduce racial and ethnic health disparities.

Strategies to Enhance Flu Vaccination

Get vaccinated and develop a plan to vaccinate all staff and office members

- Educate staff on influenza; dispel myths. For more information visit www.michigan.gov/flu
- Stress the importance of being immunized.
- Let patients know that the staff is vaccinated against influenza

Recommend the vaccine!

- Your professional recommendation matters to patients and has a positive impact on their decision to receive the influenza vaccine.
- Use reminders, such as chart notes, stickers and flags, to prompt you to recommend vaccines to your patients and their parents.

Reduce financial barriers

- Participate in the Vaccines for Children (VFC) program which offers low or no cost vaccines to eligible children birth through 18 years of age. Find out more at www.michigan.gov/vfc.

Use standing orders

- Utilize standing orders for “vaccine-only” visits
- Templates for standing orders are available from the Immunization Action Coalition (www.immunize.org) and the AIM Toolkit (www.aimtoolkit.org).

Provide multiple vaccines in a single visit

- Simultaneous administration of needed vaccines, including influenza, is a best practice; use separate anatomic sites.

Do not miss an opportunity to administer the influenza vaccine

- Assess immunization status and vaccinate at every visit – well, sick, sports, and camp physicals.
- Vaccinate as soon as influenza vaccine becomes available and until vaccine expires.

Use reminder and recall tools to get patients into the office

- The Michigan Care Improvement Registry (MCIR) can help create lists and reminder notices. Contact the regional MCIR office for more information or www.mcir.org

Assess your vaccination efforts and provide feedback to those who can affect change

- Document all administered doses in MCIR.
- Without periodic assessment, you can't know how you are doing. MCIR can help determine the influenza immunization rates in your office.