

Are you Playing Your Part this Flu Season?

Do you vaccinate throughout the influenza season?

- Timing and severity of influenza seasons is unpredictable.
 - Flu activity can occur as early as October and as late as May.
 - In more than 80% of flu seasons since 1976, peak flu activity has not occurred until January or later.

Do you have flu vaccine available throughout the season?

- Providers should stock ample supply of flu vaccine for all populations seen in your office.
- Plenty of flu vaccine is available this flu season; a record number of doses are projected.
 - 160 million doses of flu vaccine available nationwide.
 - As of late December 2011, 130.1 million doses have been distributed nationally.
 - Over 2.8 million doses have been distributed to Michigan.
- Recently MDCH received complaints that some provider offices do not have flu vaccine available and do not plan on restocking.
 - VFC children are entitled to receive the flu vaccine in their medical home.
 - Parents and patients are forced to seek medical care elsewhere, possibly where their insurance is not accepted.
 - While vaccine is available at more community locations this year, this may create an out-of-pocket cost for some families.

Do you utilize the resources available to obtain additional influenza vaccine if needed?

- The Influenza Vaccine Exchange Network (IVEN) is available for sharing private flu vaccine.
- LHDs can provide information on public flu vaccine supply.
- Most manufacturers allow small vaccine orders, as little as 10 doses.
- Many manufactures offer vaccine return policies for expired vaccine.
- To prevent a child from going unvaccinated, providers can use Vaccines for Children (VFC) flu vaccine if private stock flu vaccine is not available.
 - Borrowed VFC flu vaccine must be replaced as soon as the provider's private stock vaccine arrives.

Are you ensuring that all of your patients are protected from influenza?

- CDC recommends an annual flu vaccine for everyone 6 months and older as the first and best way to protect against influenza.
- CDC data from several national surveys show that Michigan lags behind other states in flu vaccination coverage.
- Michigan has over 300,000 children on Medicaid and only 29% of those have received one dose of flu vaccine this season as of early December 2011.
- According to a national survey, over 90% of the time the place of vaccination for children is in a provider office.
- Persons who receive a vaccine recommendation from their provider are 7 times more likely to be immunized, highlighting the critical importance of provider recommendation.

Are you utilizing MCIR for good public health practice?

- All flu vaccine doses should be entered into MCIR.
 - With flu vaccine available at multiple locations, this is extremely important.
- Providers can generate flu recall notices from the Michigan Care Improvement Registry (MCIR) to increase coverage

Increases in influenza activity are expected in the next few weeks as flu season gets underway. Vaccination is the first and most important step in protecting your patients against the flu. Please play your part and ensure that your patients are protected. For more information, visit www.michigan.gov/flu.