

Strategies to Improve Health Care Personnel (HCP) Vaccination

When health care personnel (HCP) get the flu, they expose their families, patients and coworkers to infection. Most healthy adults can infect others with the flu up to 1 day before they start having symptoms, and once sick, they can infect others for up to 5 days.^{1, 15, 25}

Factors associated with a higher rate of influenza vaccination among HCP include older age; being a hospital employee; having employer provided healthcare insurance; having had pneumococcal, hepatitis B, or influenza vaccination in the past; using an intranet website reporting system; and/or having visited a health care professional during the previous year.^{1, 28-31} Additionally, non-Hispanic black HCP were less likely than non-Hispanic white HCP to be vaccinated.³²

It is critical that Michigan's HCP receive the flu vaccine every year, and below are some strategies for facilitating this process

Make Vaccine Convenient

The most effective strategy in increasing flu vaccination rates among HCP is convenience! It is vital to have flu shots available in an expedient, easily accessible location, which sometimes means bringing the vaccine to people where they are. Best practices include a "bucket brigade" where nurses took flu vaccine to staff members on every floor of the facility and during every shift worked. Consider having flu vaccine available on rolling carts in cafeterias, employee entrances, parking garages, grand rounds, conferences, medical records areas, departmental meetings, and so on.

Remove Cost Barriers (Offer Free Vaccination)

One common barrier cited for not receiving the annual flu vaccine is cost. To remove this obstacle for your facility, offer free vaccine. Get creative and consider using an outside contractor to run your campaign. Explore the possibility of making arrangements with your insurance company to cover the cost of vaccine, while your organization can pay for the administration fee. The benefits of vaccinating HCP far outweigh the costs.

Educate & Dispel Myths

Utilize the materials in this kit to educate HCP about flu vaccination and dispel myths and misconceptions. See *Flu Facts & Responses to Common Concerns* in this kit.

Engage Upper Level Management and Administration

Another important factor is to engage upper level management and administration in the process. Have managers serve as advocates for vaccination, and publicly vaccinate these individuals to set the tone for your campaign. Many hospitals and facilities have incorporated "flu deputies" or individuals responsible for making HCP flu vaccination an infection control and patient safety issue.

Put it in Writing! Create a Policy Statement

If your facility does not have a formal policy on HCP immunization, develop one, have it approved, and disseminate it to all employees. See *Template Policy Statement for Influenza Immunization of HCP* in this kit.

Use Every Means of Communication Available

Make sure that every single HCP in your facility is exposed to messages about your immunization campaign. Use e-mails, newsletters, paycheck stuffers, and discussions at departmental meetings to facilitate this process. See *Promote the Campaign* in this kit.

Offer Incentives

Consider offering incentives to HCP who get immunized. Suggestions include weekly raffles of a “free” day off from work or gift certificates for lunch or dinner. Create friendly competition among units or floors to achieve the highest rates, and reward the winner with a prize such as a pizza luncheon.

Organize a Kick-Off Event

A kick-off event is a great way to launch the immunization campaign. Create a theme for the event/campaign and hold the kick-off event as soon as flu vaccine is available. For maximum exposure, hold the event in a high-traffic area. Arrange to have the CEO/administrator/medical director give opening statements. Request in advance that any speakers demonstrate their commitment by getting a flu vaccination at the kick-off. After speakers have been immunized, continue to offer vaccine to all HCP.

Be sure to publicize upcoming campaign activities and incentives at the kick-off event. If you are interested in having local press cover the event, coordinate with the marketing/public relations department, or if permitted, contact them directly.

This coming flu season, make a commitment to having all of your organization’s HCP vaccinated against the flu!

Materials adapted from the National Immunization Conference, Massachusetts Medical Society, Masspro, and the Massachusetts Department of Public Health