



Immunization Update

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Dr. Cary Bjork: Serving as a sentinel physician since 1997

Seventy-five practices across Michigan participate in the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) U.S. Influenza Sentinel Provider Surveillance Network. As an important source of virologic and disease surveillance data, these providers help to answer the questions of where, when, and what influenza viruses are circulating. This information is an important part of pandemic influenza preparedness. The Michigan Department of Community Health's Division of Immunization invited one of the Michigan sentinels, Cary M. Bjork, M.D., to share information about his practice and his experience with Influenza Sentinel Surveillance.

Written by Cary M. Bjork, M.D.

K. Charles Wright, M.D., was the first internal medicine specialist in the Upper Peninsula and founder of Marquette Internal Medicine Associates. Currently, it consists of six general internists, one internal medicine/pediatric specialist, and one physician assistant. Eight nurses and thirty other staff members including administrators, business office personnel, medical records personnel, transcriptionists, bone density technologists, a medical technologist, two medical laboratory technicians and other support staff work with us. Marquette Internal Medicine
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Cary Bjork, MD, Lois Maki, LPN, and Melissa Broeders, PA-C review a patient's chart

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We will continue to mail hard copies of the newsletter to our subscribers who do not have email access at work.

To view past issues of the newsletters, go to www.michigan.gov/immunize.

For more information, you may contact Rosemary Franklin at franklinr@michigan.gov or 517-335-9485.

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Influenza sentinel physician serves community

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Associates serves patients from the Upper Peninsula and some out of state patients. I joined this practice in August 1977 and became an Influenza Sentinel Physician in 1997.

As an Influenza Sentinel Physician, I report influenza-like illnesses to the Michigan Department of Community Health (MDCH) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) on a weekly basis. My office nurse keeps track of the number of patient visits each week; I record the number of influenza-like illnesses that I see during the week on a work folder provided by CDC. I follow the format provided on this folder and find it very helpful. Additionally, I submit nasopharyngeal swabs on each patient with influenza-like illness that I see using the kits provided by MDCH until my kits are depleted. If I have sufficient patients to culture, I will submit nine cultures per year to the MDCH Laboratory in Lansing. The time commitment involved in being a sentinel physician is minimal, certainly not over ten minutes per week and usually less.

In order to provide optimal health care, it is essential that primary care physicians are aware of the infectious diseases present in their communities. I am very appreciative of the weekly feedback from both MDCH and CDC. I often distribute copies of this crucial information to the other providers in the practice as it guides treatment for influenza-like illnesses. For example, treating patients when Influenza B is in the community can be much more

costly than treating patients when only Influenza A is present. Also, the administration of antibiotics can be avoided when a practitioner is comfortable that the diagnosis is influenza rather than a bacterial infection. The surveillance influenza cultures that I receive on my patients on a regular basis throughout the flu season are also useful. The availability of these cultures has allowed us to determine the predominant circulating strain of influenza and, on several occasions, I have been able to document influenza in patients whose rapid influenza tests were negative. I appreciate receiving the *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report (MMWR)*, the *Emerging Infectious Disease Journal* and the other information provided from CDC and MDCH.

In summary, I have been very pleased and satisfied to serve as a sentinel physician for the past eight years. I plan to continue to be involved in this program and am sure that these sentinel physician activities have assisted us in giving optimal health care to our patients.

Editor’s Note

The Michigan Department of Community Health Division of Immunization would like to thank Dr. Bjork for his work as an Influenza Sentinel Physician and for his contribution to this newsletter.

For more information about the CDC Influenza Sentinel Provider Surveillance Network, contact Rachel Potter by phone at 517-335-9710 or by email at PotterR1@michigan.gov.



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The rest of this newsletter has been deleted, because the remaining material is outdated.