



Improving Adult Immunizations Rates in West Virginia: Flu Vaccinations in Long Term Care Facilities

Position: The West Virginia Immunization Network (WIN) strongly supports Flu vaccination for 100% of health care workers, with patient contact, in long term care facilities. Long-term care facilities should remove administrative and financial barriers to vaccinations for health care workers and offer vaccinations as part of the employee health program.

Adopted February 10, 2006

Flu Vaccinations in Long Term Care Facilities: Where are we?

Currently the WV Bureau for Public Health does not collect state data on the level of immunizations among health care workers in Long Term Care Facilities.

Why Health Care Workers in Long Term Facilities?

Many health-care workers are at risk for exposure to and possible transmission of vaccine-preventable diseases because of their contact with patients.

Flu vaccination of health care workers in long term care facilities safeguards protects patients, at high risk for flu, from becoming infected through exposure to infected workers.

Influenza outbreaks have caused illness and death among patients in long term care facilities.

Vaccination rates among health care workers were only 40% in a 2003 survey conducted by NHIS (CDC; National Immunization Program; unpublished data; 2005).

The Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) strongly recommends that all Health Care Workers be vaccinated against influenza to reduce staff illnesses and absenteeism during the influenza season and to reduce the spread of influenza to and from workers and patients.

Transmission of influenza among health care workers causes absenteeism and losses in productivity resulting in disruption in the provision of health care services.

Currently 15 states have regulations regarding vaccination of health care workers in long term care facilities (MMWR; July 29, 2005)

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Do we need help in West Virginia?

- 32.1% of West Virginians over the age of 65 reported not having a flu shot in the past 12 months. (Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System; 2004). The Healthy People 2010 target is 90%.
- 35.2% of West Virginians over the age of 65 reported not ever having a pneumonia vaccination. (Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System; 2004). The Healthy People 2010 target is 90%.
- In 2003, there were 457 deaths in West Virginia due to influenza or pneumonia. 427 (93%) of these deaths occurred in adults of the age of 55 years and older (WV Vital Statistics; 2003)
- Influenza typically occurs during the winter months and has been responsible for an average of 36,000 deaths per year in the U.S - - most in adults aged 65 years and over. (Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services; Adult Immunization; overview; 2005)
- There are over 40,000 cases of invasive pneumococcal disease in the U. S. and approximately one-third of these cases occur in adults 65 and older. Over half of the more than 5000 annual deaths from invasive pneumococcal disease occur in adults 65 years of age and older. (Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services; Adult Immunization; overview; 2005)

What are the costs associated with not getting flu or pneumonia immunizations?

- Over 225,000 excess hospitalizations occur each year due to influenza, with 63% occurring in adults 65 and over. (CDC; MMWR; July 29, 2005)
- Influenza vaccines can prevent illness in approximately 70% - 90% of healthy adults under the age of 65. (CDC; MMWR; July 29, 2005)
- Vaccination of healthy adults has resulted in decreased work absenteeism and decreased use of health care resources, including use of antibiotics. Reductions of up to 44% in health care provider visits, 45% in lost workdays; 28% in days working with reduced effectiveness and 25% in antibiotic use have been reported. (CDC; MMWR; July 29, 2005)

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