

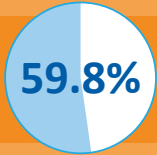


LONG-TERM CARE STAFF IMMUNIZATION

Healthcare personnel in long-term care settings have the lowest reported influenza vaccination rates among all healthcare personnel.

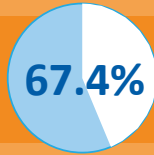
In the 2014 – 2015 flu season:

ONLY



of long-term care assistants/aides were immunized.¹

ONLY



of long-term care administrative support staff, food service workers, housekeeping, maintenance staff, janitors, and laundry workers were immunized.¹

Influenza outbreaks in long-term care facilities have been attributed to low influenza vaccination coverage among healthcare personnel. Vaccination of healthcare professionals in long-term care settings is extremely important because²:

- People 65 years and older are at greater risk of serious complications from the flu.
- Flu vaccine effectiveness is generally lowest in the elderly, making vaccination of close contacts critical.
- Multiple studies have demonstrated health benefits to residents with vaccination of healthcare professionals, including reduced flu-related complications and reduced risk of death.

STRATEGIES THAT WORK TO INCREASE STAFF IMMUNIZATION

Institute a policy that requires staff vaccination. These policies increase the immunization rate to more than 97 percent among long-term care employees.¹

Implement a policy where, in the event of an influenza outbreak, unvaccinated employees must take unpaid leave (i.e., use of sick or vacation time is not allowed).²

- Require staff to sign a declination form.
- Require staff declining immunization to wear a mask at all times and a button stating he/she declined vaccination.²

Use incentives to increase immunization participation:²

- Enter employees who register for immunization into a drawing for an iPod or other electronic device.
- Use merchandise as an incentive: winter hats, caps, bags, or water bottles.
- Tie flu shots into promotions for overall wellness by giving away pedometers, yoga kits, workout videos or electronic scales.
- Provide small gift cards (worth approximately \$20) for participation.

Use blitz advertising for a vaccination campaign: flyers in mailboxes, posters by frequently traveled areas, or reminders inside restrooms.³

Reduce barriers to healthcare personnel being vaccinated by offering:^{2,3}

- Easy access to vaccination locations
- Free vaccinations to all staff (including volunteers), in a small private room, if possible
- Onsite vaccinations over multiple days and shifts
- A strong staff educational program that focuses on protecting staff members and their families, as well as residents
- Information to dispel myths/fears that influenza is not a serious illness or not a risk for young or healthy people, or that the vaccine causes illness/side effects

Sources:

¹CDC. "Influenza Vaccination Coverage Among Health Care Personnel." MMWR. Sept 18, 2015. 64(36); 993-999.

²CDC Toolkit for Long-Term Care Employers: campaign materials & tools to increase vaccination

³Do No Harm...Stick Out Your Arm!: Long-term Care toolkit and vaccination campaign resources

⁴CDC Make It Your Business to Fight the Flu: toolkit for businesses and employers