

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services



News Flash – All providers and suppliers who enrolled in the Medicare program prior to March 25, 2011, will have their enrollment revalidated under new risk screening criteria required by the Affordable Care Act (section 6401a). Do NOT send in revalidated enrollment forms until you are notified to do so by your Medicare Administrative Contractor. You will receive a notice to revalidate between now and March 2013. For more information about provider revalidation, review MLN Matters® Special Edition Article SE1126, which is available at <http://www.cms.gov/MLNMattersArticles/downloads/SE1126.pdf> on the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services website.

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2011-2012 Seasonal Influenza (Flu) Resources for Health Care Professionals

Provider Types Affected

This article is for all Medicare Fee-For-Service (FFS) physicians, non-physician practitioners, providers, suppliers, and other health care professionals who order, refer, or provide seasonal flu vaccines and vaccine administration provided to Medicare beneficiaries.

What You Need to Know

- Keep this Special Edition Medicare Learning Network (MLN) Matters article and refer to it throughout the 2011 - 2012 flu season.

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- Take advantage of each office visit as an opportunity to encourage your patients to protect themselves from the seasonal flu and serious complications by getting a seasonal flu shot.
- Continue to provide the seasonal flu shot as long as you have vaccine available, even after the new year.
- Don't forget to immunize yourself and your staff.

Introduction

Flu seasons are unpredictable and can be severe. Over a period of 30 years, between 1976 and 2006, estimates of flu-associated deaths in the United States range from a low of about 3,000 to a high of about 49,000 people.¹ Complications of flu can include pneumonia, ear infections, sinus infections, dehydration, and even death.

The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) reminds health care professionals that Medicare Part B reimburses health care providers for seasonal flu vaccines and their administration. (Medicare provides coverage of the seasonal flu vaccine without any out-of-pocket costs to the Medicare patient. No deductible or copayment/coinsurance applies.) Medicare provides coverage of the seasonal influenza virus vaccine and its administration for all Medicare beneficiaries regardless of risk for the disease; however, some individuals are at greater risk for contracting influenza. Vaccination is recommended for all individuals aged 6 months and older. While everyone should get a seasonal influenza vaccine each influenza season, it's especially important that certain groups get vaccinated either because they are at high risk of having serious influenza-related complications or because they live with or care for people at high risk for developing influenza-related complications. For more information, refer to the most recent recommendations at <http://www.cdc.gov/flu/protect/keyfacts.htm> on the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) website.

Vaccinate Early to Protect Against the Flu

The CDC recommends a yearly flu vaccination as the first and most important step in protecting against flu viruses. Remind your patients that annual vaccination is recommended for optimal protection. Medicare pays for the flu vaccine and its administration for seniors and other Medicare beneficiaries with no co-pay or deductible. Take advantage of each office visit and start protecting your patients as

¹ Flu.gov. 2011. *About the Flu [online]*. Washington D.C.: The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2011 [cited 16 September 2011]. Available from the World Wide Web: <http://www.flu.gov/individualfamily/about/index.html>

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soon as your 2011-2012 seasonal flu vaccine arrives. And, don't forget to immunize yourself and your staff.

Get the Flu Vaccination -- Not the Flu.

Remember – The influenza vaccine plus its administration are covered Part B benefits. Note that the influenza vaccine is NOT a Part D covered drug. For information about Medicare's coverage of the influenza vaccine and its administration, as well as related educational resources for health care professionals and their staff, please visit

http://www.cms.gov/MLNProducts/35_PreventiveServices.asp on the CMS website.

Educational Products for Health Care Professionals

CMS has developed a variety of educational resources to help Medicare FFS health care professionals understanding coverage, coding, billing, and reimbursement guidelines for seasonal flu vaccines and their administration.

1. **MLN Seasonal Influenza Related Products for Health Care Professionals**
 - ***MLN Matters ® Article MM7575: Influenza Vaccine Payment Allowances – Annual Update for 2011-2012 Season*** – This article contains information on the payment allowances for influenza vaccines for the 2011-2012 season. You can view this article at <http://www.cms.gov/MLNMattersArticles/Downloads/MM7575.pdf> on the CMS website.
 - ***Quick Reference Information: Medicare Part B Immunization Billing*** - This educational tool is designed to provide education on Medicare-covered preventive immunizations. Available in print and as a downloadable PDF at http://www.cms.gov/MLNProducts/downloads/gr_immun_bill.pdf on the CMS website. This product is also available in hardcopy as part of the "Quick Reference Information Resources" hardcopy booklet.
 - ***The Guide to Medicare Preventive Services, Fourth Edition*** - This guide is designed to provide education on Medicare's preventive benefits. Available as a downloadable PDF at http://www.cms.gov/MLNProducts/downloads/mps_guide_web-061305.pdf on the CMS website.
 - ***Preventive Immunizations Brochure*** - This brochure is designed to provide education on Medicare's Influenza Vaccine, Pneumococcal Vaccine, and Hepatitis B Vaccine benefits. Available in print and as a downloadable PDF at

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http://www.cms.gov/MLNProducts/downloads/Adult_Immunization.pdf on the CMS website.

- **Quick Reference Information: Preventive Services** - This educational tool is designed to provide education on the Medicare-covered preventive services. Available as a downloadable PDF at http://www.cms.gov/MLNProducts/downloads/MPS_QuickReferenceChart_1.pdf on the CMS website. This product is also available in hardcopy as part of the "Quick Reference Information Resources" hardcopy booklet.
- **Quick Reference Information Resources: Medicare Preventive Services** - This booklet is designed to provide education on coverage, coding and billing criteria for Medicare-covered preventive services. It includes the following four quick reference information charts: Preventive Services, Medicare Immunization Billing, The ABCs of Providing the Initial Preventive Physical Examination and The ABCs of Providing the Annual Wellness Visit. Available in hardcopy only.

• **Note:** To order hardcopy products, please visit the MLN Preventive Services Educational Products web page at https://www.cms.gov/MLNProducts/35_PreventiveServices.asp and select "MLN Product Ordering Page" in the "Related Links Inside CMS" section.

- **MLN Preventive Services Educational Products Web Page** - This Medicare Learning Network® (MLN) web page provides descriptions of all MLN preventive services related educational products and resources designed specifically for use by Medicare FFS health care professionals. View this page at http://www.cms.gov/MLNProducts/35_PreventiveServices.asp on the Internet.

2. Other CMS Resources

- **Seasonal Influenza Vaccines Pricing** is at http://www.cms.gov/McrPartBDrugAvgSalesPrice/10_VaccinesPricing.asp on the Internet.
- **Prevention General Information Overview** is at <http://www.cms.gov/PrevntionGenInfo> on the Internet.
- **CMS Immunizations page** is at <http://www.cms.gov/immunizations> on the CMS website.

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- CMS Frequently Asked Questions are available at http://questions.cms.hhs.gov/cgi-bin/cms_hhs.cfg/php/enduser/std_alp.php?p_sid=I3ALEDhi on the CMS website.
- Medicare Benefit Policy Manual - Chapter 15, Section 50.4.4.2 – Immunizations available at <http://www.cms.gov/manuals/downloads/bp102c15.pdf> on the CMS website.
- Medicare Claims Processing Manual – Chapter 18, Preventive and Screening Services available at <http://www.cms.gov/manuals/downloads/clm104c18.pdf> on the CMS website.
- Medicare Part B Drug Average Sales Price Payment Amounts Influenza and Pneumococcal Vaccines Pricing found at http://www.cms.gov/McrPartBDrugAvgSalesPrice/01_overview.asp on the Internet.
- 2011-2012 Immunizers' Question & Answer Guide to Medicare Part B and Medicaid Coverage of Seasonal Influenza and Pneumococcal Vaccinations available at <http://www.cms.gov/immunizations/Downloads/20112012ImmunizersGuide.pdf> on the CMS website.
- Immunizations Web Page at <http://www.cms.gov/immunizations> on the CMS website.

3. *Other Resources*

The following non-CMS resources are just a few of the many available in which clinicians may find useful information and tools to help increase seasonal flu vaccine awareness and utilization during the 2011 – 2012 flu season:

- Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices are at <http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/recs/acip/default.htm> on the Internet.
- American Lung Association's Influenza (Flu) Center is at <http://www.lungusa.org> on the Internet. This website provides a flu clinic locator at <http://www.flucliniclocator.org> on the Internet. Individuals can

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enter their zip code to find a flu clinic in their area. Providers can also obtain information on how to add their flu clinic to this site.

- Other sites with helpful information include:
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention - <http://www.cdc.gov/flu>;
- Flu.gov - <http://www.flu.gov>;
- Food and Drug Administration - <http://www.fda.gov>;
- Immunization Action Coalition - <http://www.immunize.org>;
- Indian Health Services - <http://www.ihs.gov/>;
- National Alliance for Hispanic Health - <http://www.hispanichealth.org>;
- National Foundation For Infectious Diseases - <http://www.nfid.org/influenza>;
- National Library of Medicine and NIH Medline Plus - <http://www.nlm.nih.gov/medlineplus/immunization.html>;
- National Network for Immunization Information - <http://www.immunizationinfo.org>;
- National Vaccine Program - <http://www.hhs.gov/nvpo>;
- Office of Disease Prevention and Health Promotion - <http://odphp.osophs.dhhs.gov>;
- Partnership for Prevention - <http://www.prevent.org>; and
- World Health Organization - <http://www.who.int/en> on the Internet.

Beneficiary Information

For information to share with your Medicare patients, please visit <http://www.medicare.gov> on the Internet.

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