

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



News Flash -

NEW products from the Medicare Learning Network® (MLN)

- [“Providing the Annual Wellness Visit \(AWV\),”](#) Booklet, ICN 907786, Downloadable

MLN Matters® Number: SE1242

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## 2012-2013 Seasonal Influenza (Flu) Resources for Health Care Professionals

### Provider Types Affected

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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

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- Keep this Special Edition *MLN Matters* article and refer to it throughout the 2012 - 2013 flu season.
- 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.

#### Disclaimer

This article was prepared as a service to the public and is not intended to grant rights or impose obligations. This article may contain references or links to statutes, regulations, or other policy materials. The information provided is only intended to be a general summary. It is not intended to take the place of either the written law or regulations. We encourage readers to review the specific statutes, regulations and other interpretive materials for a full and accurate statement of their contents. CPT only copyright 2011 American Medical Association.

- 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

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Annual outbreaks of seasonal flu typically occur as early as October and as late as May, with peak months in January and February. Illness from seasonal flu usually lasts one to two weeks, and flu-related complications include pneumonia and dehydration. Approximately 5 to 20 percent of Americans catch the seasonal flu each year. Getting the flu vaccine is your best protection against the flu.<sup>1</sup>

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.)*

### Protect You and Your Family From the Flu!

You can help your Medicare patients reduce their risk for contracting seasonal flu and serious complications by using every office visit as an opportunity to recommend they take advantage of the annual seasonal flu shot benefit covered by Medicare. And don't forget, health care providers and their staff can spread the highly contagious flu virus to their patients. Don't forget to immunize yourself and your staff.

## Educational Products for Health Care Professionals

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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 MM8047: Influenza Vaccine Payment Allowances – Annual Update for 2012-2013 Season*** – This article contains the payment allowances for the 2012-2013 flu season. You can download it at <http://www.cms.gov/Outreach-and-Education/Medicare-Learning-Network-MLN/MLNMattersArticles/Downloads/MM8047.pdf> on the CMS website.

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<sup>1</sup> Flu.gov. 2012. *Seasonal Flu [online]*. Washington D.C.: The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, 2010 [cited 3 October 2012]. Available from the World Wide Web: [http://www.flu.gov/about\\_the\\_flu/seasonal/index.html](http://www.flu.gov/about_the_flu/seasonal/index.html)

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- **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/Outreach-and-Education/Medicare-Learning-Network-MLN/MLNProducts/downloads/qr\\_immun\\_bill.pdf](http://www.cms.gov/Outreach-and-Education/Medicare-Learning-Network-MLN/MLNProducts/downloads/qr_immun_bill.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/Outreach-and-Education/Medicare-Learning-Network-MLN/MLNProducts/downloads/MPS\\_QuickReferenceChart\\_1.pdf](http://www.cms.gov/Outreach-and-Education/Medicare-Learning-Network-MLN/MLNProducts/downloads/MPS_QuickReferenceChart_1.pdf) on the CMS website.
  - **Preventive Immunizations** – This booklet is designed to provide education on the seasonal influenza, pneumococcal, and Hepatitis B vaccines. Available as a downloadable PDF at <http://www.cms.gov/Outreach-and-Education/Medicare-Learning-Network-MLN/MLNProducts/Downloads/Preventive-Immunizations-ICN907787.pdf> on the CMS website.
  - **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/Outreach-and-Education/Medicare-Learning-Network-MLN/MLNProducts/PreventiveServices.html> on the CMS website.
  - **Preventive Services Educational Products PDF** – This PDF provides a list of all MLN products related to Medicare-covered preventive services. View this PDF at [http://www.cms.gov/Outreach-and-Education/Medicare-Learning-Network-MLN/MLNProducts/downloads/education\\_products\\_prevserv.pdf](http://www.cms.gov/Outreach-and-Education/Medicare-Learning-Network-MLN/MLNProducts/downloads/education_products_prevserv.pdf) on the CMS website.
2. **Other CMS Resources**
- **Seasonal Influenza Vaccines 2012 Pricing** is at <http://www.cms.gov/Medicare/Medicare-Fee-for-Service-Part-B-Drugs/McrPartBDrugAvgSalesPrice/2012ASPFiles.html> on the CMS website.
  - **Immunizations web page** is at <http://www.cms.gov/Medicare/Prevention/Immunizations/index.html> on the CMS website.
  - **Prevention General Information** is at <http://www.cms.gov/Medicare/Prevention/PrevntionGenInfo/index.html> on the CMS website.
  - **CMS Frequently Asked Questions** are available at <http://questions.cms.gov/faq.php> on the CMS website.

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- Medicare Benefit Policy Manual - Chapter 15, Section 50.4.4.2 – Immunizations available at <http://www.cms.gov/Regulations-and-Guidance/Guidance/Manuals/downloads/bp102c15.pdf> on the CMS website.
- Medicare Claims Processing Manual – Chapter 18, Preventive and Screening Services available at <http://www.cms.gov/Regulations-and-Guidance/Guidance/Manuals/downloads/clm104c18.pdf> on the Internet.

### 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 2012 – 2013 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 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

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- World Health Organization - <http://www.who.int/en> on the Internet.

## Beneficiary Information

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

**News Flash** - Medicare provides coverage for one seasonal influenza virus vaccine per influenza season for all Medicare beneficiaries. Medicare generally provides coverage of pneumococcal vaccination and its administration once in a lifetime for all Medicare beneficiaries. Medicare may provide coverage of additional pneumococcal vaccinations based on risk or uncertainty of beneficiary pneumococcal vaccination status. Medicare provides coverage for these vaccines and their administration with no co-pay or deductible. Also, don't forget to immunize yourself and your staff. *Know what to do about the flu.*

**Remember** – Influenza vaccine plus its administration is a covered Part B benefit. Influenza vaccine is NOT a Part D covered drug. CMS will provide information and a link to the 2012-2013 Influenza Vaccine prices when they are available. For more information on coverage and billing of the flu vaccine and its administration, please visit the [CMS Medicare Learning Network® Preventive Services Educational Products](#) and [CMS Immunizations](#) web pages. While some providers may offer the flu vaccine, others can help their patients locate a vaccine provider within their local community. [HealthMap Vaccine Finder](#) is a free, online service where users can search for locations offering flu vaccines.

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