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Influenza/Flu Season and Available Resources for Providers

Note: This article was updated on July 14, 2014 to include links to more current information available since SE0580 was published in 2005.

Provider Types Affected

Physicians, non-physician practitioners, providers, and other health care professionals who bill Medicare carriers or fiscal intermediaries (FIs) for flu vaccines and vaccine administration.

Provider Action Needed

Special Edition 0580 is published by the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) to alert providers to influenza resources that are available to them and their patients. While some of these resources are not CMS-sponsored websites or products, they are respected informational sites and products sponsored by health care professionals.

CMS Resources

The following are CMS web-based resources.

Immunization Website

The Immunization website is one-stop shopping for informational and educational resources related to CMS immunization initiatives and is available at <http://www.cms.gov/Medicare/Prevention/Immunizations/index.html> on the CMS website. Available resources include the following articles:

MLN Articles

- Article MM3936 provides guidelines for payment of vaccines and their administration at Renal Dialysis facilities at <http://www.cms.gov/outreach-and-education/medicare-learning-network-mln/mlnmattersarticles/downloads/MM3936.pdf>; and

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- Article MM3618 provides information about billing vaccines <http://www.cms.gov/outreach-and-education/medicare-learning-network-mln/mlnmattersarticles/downloads/MM3618.pdf> on the CMS website.

Brochures

The Immunization Guide can be downloaded and printed at

http://www.cms.gov/Medicare/Prevention/Immunizations/Downloads/2012-2013_Flu_Guide.pdf on the CMS website.

Provider Education

The following publications address Medicare preventative services:

- *Medicare Preventive Services Educational Resource Web Guide* at <http://www.cms.gov/Outreach-and-Education/Medicare-Learning-Network-MLN/MLNProducts/PreventiveServices.html>;
- *Downloadable Publications* - Electronic versions of publications designed to aid in understanding the Medicare program at <http://www.cms.gov/Outreach-and-Education/Medicare-Learning-Network-MLN/MLNProducts/MLN-Publications.html>; and
- *Web-Based Training Modules (WBTs)* - Training courses covering various Medicare topics, including General Program Information, Payment Policy, Preventive Services, and Office Management Information at http://cms.meridianksi.com/kc/main/kc_frame.asp?kc_ident=kc0001&loc=1 on the CMS website.

Other CMS Resources

Other helpful CMS resources include the following:

- *Vaccination Administration Reimbursement Rates* This publication describes the fees Medicare pays for flu vaccine administration at <http://www.cms.gov/Medicare/Medicare-Fee-for-Service-Part-B-Drugs/McrPartBDrugAvgSalesPrice/VaccinesPricing.html>;
- *Medicare Preventive Services Influenza/Pneumococcal Immunizations Web Page* - This web page contains information and resources related to Adult Immunizations including immunization data, billing and coding instructions, and other resources at <http://www.cms.gov/Medicare/Prevention/Immunizations/index.html>; and
- *Frequently Asked Questions*: <https://questions.cms.gov/> on the CMS website.

Other Resources

The following are resources that are not CMS web sites but providers may find them useful.

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2-1-1 Information and Referral Service

The Consumer Education Working Group would like health care providers to know about another new resource to help citizens find a flu shot this fall. It is anticipated that this service will go hand-in-hand with the ALA's Flu Locator site. Those who do not have Internet access can call the 2-1-1 information and referral service and the operator can then use the Flu Locator site to help the person find a nearby influenza clinic.

2-1-1 is an easily remembered telephone number that helps callers find critical health and human services available in their community. Callers can get answers to questions such as shelter locations after a natural disaster, traveler aid, emergency funding, or flu vaccination clinic locations.

2-1-1 serves approximately 139 million Americans - over 46% of the US population. One hundred and seventy-one (171) active 2-1-1 systems cover all or part of 32 states (including 14 states with 100% coverage) plus Washington, DC and Puerto Rico.

When this system is connected nationwide, it will provide easy access to social service resources for everyone. The technology ensures that a real person will answer every time – no recorded messages. Anyone with flu vaccine can register with a local 2-1-1 call center. The call center will include that information in their database and make it available to the community.

For more information about 2-1-1, go to <http://www.211.org> or <http://www.airs.org> on the Internet.

Influenza Pocket Guides/ Information about Vaccines

Although hard copy versions of the Influenza Pocket Guides are no longer available, electronic and camera-ready versions are available, copyright free and can be found at http://www.immunize.org/pocketguides/pocketguide_flu.pdf on the Internet.

Comprehensive information about vaccines and vaccine-preventable diseases can be found at <http://www.vaccineinformation.org> on the Internet.

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