

**It's Not Too Late to Get the Seasonal Flu Shot.** While seasonal influenza outbreaks can happen as early as October, influenza activity usually peaks in January.<sup>1</sup> The seasonal flu vaccine is the best way to prevent infection and the complications associated with the flu. Re-vaccination is necessary each flu season because flu viruses change each year.

CMS is asking our health care provider community to please encourage your Medicare patients who haven't already done so to get their annual flu shot. It is also important to be sure that you immunize yourself and your staff.

**Remember** - Influenza vaccine plus its administration are covered Part B benefits. Note that influenza vaccine is NOT a Part D covered drug.

For information about Medicare's coverage of the seasonal influenza virus vaccine and its administration, as well as related educational resources for health care professionals and their staff, please go to [http://www.cms.hhs.gov/MLNProducts/Downloads/flu\\_products.pdf](http://www.cms.hhs.gov/MLNProducts/Downloads/flu_products.pdf) on the CMS website. You will find a variety of resources that explain Medicare coverage and claims submission policies related to the seasonal influenza vaccine.

For information on Medicare policies related to H1N1 influenza, please go to <http://www.cms.hhs.gov/H1N1> on the CMS website.

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<sup>1</sup> Seasonal Influenza, 2009-2010. *Key Facts About Seasonal Flu Vaccine* [online]. Atlanta, GA: The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2009 [cited 23 December 2009]. Available from the World Wide Web: (<http://www.cdc.gov/flu/protect/keyfacts.htm>)