

January 10 – 16, 2010 is National Influenza Vaccination Week. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has announced the week of January 10-16, 2010, as *National Influenza Vaccination Week*. This week-long event is designed to raise awareness of the importance of continuing influenza (flu) vaccinations, as well as foster greater use of flu vaccine in January, February, and beyond. Since flu activity typically does not peak until February or later, January and February still provide good opportunities to offer flu shots.

This year, Thursday, January 15th, is designated as Seniors' Vaccination Day. The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) needs your help to ensure that people with Medicare get their flu shots. Please use this week long event as an opportunity to place greater emphasis on flu prevention.

If you have Medicare patients who have not yet received their annual flu shots, we ask that you encourage these patients to protect themselves from the seasonal flu and serious complications arising from the flu virus by recommending that they take advantage of the flu shot benefit covered by Medicare. And remember, health care professionals and their staff are also at risk for contracting and spreading the flu virus, so don't forget to immunize yourself and your staff.

NOTE: - Influenza vaccine plus its administration are covered Part B benefits. 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 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.

For more information about National Influenza Vaccination Week, please visit the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's website, <http://www.cdc.gov/flu/nivw/index.htm>, on the Web.