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Infection Control is Everyone's Business -- The Survery Said --

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Infection Control is Everyone's Business— The Survey Said...

The Infection Control subgroup of C4I identified four programs on which we have been focusing our efforts. One of our targeted programs is the administration of influenza vaccine. Historically, the Health Center has consistently attempted



to protect our patients and employees against suffering from influenza by aggressively reaching out to all and making the vaccine conveniently available.

In preparation for last year's influenza season, the Influenza Subgroup focused their efforts to identify the targeted populations for influenza immunization, to measure compliance with published recommendations and to determine the reasons why people declined to accept the vaccine.

The subgroup determined the targeted populations to be the high-risk outpatients and employees who care for patients and engage in direct patient contact.

We identified patients from the IMA practice who were at high risk for serious complications of influenza. Our goal was to attempt to immunize one hundred percent of this population. Personalized letters were mailed to their homes to encourage them to receive the vaccine. Approximately 88% of this population was immunized against the flu.

There were 200 patients who did not receive the vaccine. We wanted to find out why these patients who were identified as high risk declined. They reported the following as the most frequent reasons why they chose not to receive the vaccine: They never get the flu shot, they felt they were healthy and didn't need one, they forgot to get the flu shot, they were worried about the side effects, they had a prior bad reaction.



The second targeted population was the employees who care for patients and provide direct patient care. The goals for the Employee Influenza Immunization Program are to protect caregivers from influenza, to prevent absenteeism, limit transmission of infection between patients and healthcare workers, and between health care workers and their family members.

“Receiving the influenza vaccination every year is the single most effective way to protect yourself and others against the flu.”

*-Nancy Dupont, RN, BSN
JDH Infection Control Specialist*

A population of 989 employees was identified. A personalized flu questionnaire was mailed to each employee asking if they received the flu vaccine, if they plan to receive the vaccine this season or if they are declining to receive the vaccine. Of these employees we know that 396 (40%) were immunized.

We identified 124 employees who declined to be immunized. They cited the following reasons why they did not get the flu shot:

- 52% responded that they never get the flu shot
- 34% felt they are healthy and don't need one
- 25% were worried about the side effects
- 18% reported that they had a prior bad reaction

Did you know?

- The *CDC* recommends influenza vaccination for health care workers who have frequent contact with persons at high risk and who can transmit influenza to persons at high risk.
- At John Dempsey Hospital, we recommend vaccination to health care workers who provide direct patient care to patients who are high-risk.
- The *single* best way to protect against the flu is to get vaccinated each fall.
- October to November is the best time to receive your vaccination, but it's not too late to receive one in January and later. The flu season can begin as early as October and last as late as May.

Side Effects

If you are concerned about vaccine side effects, here is what you can expect.

Remember the viruses in the flu shot are killed (inactivated), so you cannot get the flu from a flu shot. Some minor effects that could occur are:

- Soreness, redness, or swelling where the shot was given
- Fever (low grade)
- Aches



Good Reasons to Get Your Flu Shot

The benefits of the flu vaccine are numerous for health care workers even though you consider yourself to be healthy. They include:

- Health Care workers are less likely to transmit flu to their patients
- Health Care Workers vaccinated against the flu have less chance to bring this illness to their family members during the flu season
- Flu vaccination decreases the rate of absenteeism due to sick calls during the winter.

The influenza subgroup and several very dedicated volunteers would like to thank all of you tremendously who took the time to respond to these confidential questionnaires. It greatly helps the subgroup understand where we need to focus our attention so that we can achieve the highest flu vaccine immunization rate that will protect our health care workers and their families while we are protecting our patients.

The members of the Influenza subgroup—Nancy Dupont, Richard Garibaldi, Marie Whalen, Lisa Jaser, Mark Metersky, Linda Shanley, and Marcia Trape—would like to extend special thanks to the invaluable amount of assistance and dedication of the following employees who have volunteered their time toward this project. Many thanks to Susan Garthwait, Marie Sudsbury, and Rasy Mar.

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JCAHO and the 2006 National Patient Safety Goals

Our efforts to reduce the number of cases of influenza at John Dempsey Hospital are part of our compliance with two of the 2006 National Patient Safety Goals:

- **Goal 7: "Reduce the risk of health-care-associated infections"**
- and*
- **Goal 10: "Reduce influenza and pneumococcal disease"**