

STRATEGIES TO INCREASE HCW INFLUENZA VACCINATION RATES

Develop a Plan

- Select a leader to run the program
- Get commitment from management
- Have a policy to support staff influenza immunization
- Use every possible means to deliver messages
- Provide education and re-education
- Make the vaccine easily accessible
- Audit the program and provide feedback to staff
- Evaluate the program and celebrate successes!

Select a Leader

It takes time to organize education sessions, communication plans, clinics, incentives, monitoring and posting updates of vaccination rates and community outbreaks! Do a SWOT analysis to determine your strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats related to running the program. Get a team together (staff from different departments would be helpful) and identify goals/targets and define roles. Engage staff, who historically have not been immunized, to assist in identifying potential solutions to the barriers identified.

Commitment from Management

Management should be first to receive the vaccine and should advertise this! They should actively promote vaccination and encourage staff to get the shot. Management can support the availability of incentives by allocating money to the program.

Policy Review

Your facility should have a written policy mandating/strongly recommending annual influenza vaccination. Policy should be reviewed with all new employees and volunteers and annually with employees and volunteers. If Tamiflu is an option to getting the flu shot, talk about side effects and process for getting the medication. Review what valid medical reasons are to refuse the vaccine are. Do you have a declination form? Staff should have to complete this if they choose not to be vaccinated. You may also wish to use the Ottawa Influenza Decision Aid available at the following link:

<https://decisionaid.ohri.ca/Azsumm.php?ID=1562>

Deliver the message in as many ways as you can!

Remember you have to advertise to influence people's behaviour.

Plan an event to launch/promote the campaign

It is important to communicate to staff what the influenza plan is for the coming year. Goal, objectives, planned activities, incentives, communication techniques.

Posters/Fact Sheets/Handouts

Visit these websites to download resources to help promote the flu shot:

- <https://www.canada.ca/en/public-health/services/diseases/flu-influenza/flu-influenza-awareness-resources.html>
- <https://www.immunize.ca/influenza-campaign>

Let's Get Fluless Resources

This campaign was designed to encourage increased flu shot uptake among health care workers in hospitals and long-term care homes in Ontario by the MOHLTC. Access, download and print promotional materials from the website such as posters, handouts and fact sheets. Some resources can be customized to your setting before printing.

<http://www.health.gov.on.ca/en/pro/programs/publichealth/flu/healthcareworkers.aspx>

Send reminder messages in various ways

- Email reminders
- Screen savers
- Posters
- Team/staff meetings
- Newsletters/Flyers
- Post information on the intranet – links to websites
- Have employees who received the shot wear a sticker or button

What's in the message?

Your team should come up with catchy messages to get attention! Some key messages include:

- The Flu vaccine is very safe
- You can transmit the flu even before you feel sick...your body may fight the disease but those you care for may get very sick
- The vaccine is especially important for pregnant women and those with young children
- You can't get the flu from the flu shot. Reactions of sore arm and body aches for a couple days are common but are nowhere near as bad as having the flu!

Promote and provide staff education:

Self-directed Learning

Encourage staff to learn about the spread of influenza and the importance of getting an annual flu shot.

Visit www.york.ca/flu for more information on:

- Where to get a flu shot
- The influenza vaccine
- Information about the flu

Education Sessions

A presentation on the overview of influenza related to: the disease; the vaccine; and outbreak control measures, is available for use through York Region Public Health.

Option #1 – have staff watch it individually or as a group in the workplace or from home – it can be accessed on-line through the York Region website (www.york.ca/infectionprevention) where it can be run as a slide show as it is narrated (approximately 25 minutes long)

Option #2 – print copies of presentation and share as a resource for staff

Nursing Students

Do you have nursing students placed at your facility? They are a great resource to tap into to help promote flu vaccine messaging.

Language Barriers

Do you have staff who are ESL and would prefer information in a different language? Let Public Health know and we can work to provide resources in languages needed.

Make the vaccine accessible to staff

Where to get the flu shot:

- Hold clinics in prominent areas of the facility (lunch room, meeting/report room, entrances to facility)
- Hold clinics at various times to ensure employees who work different shifts have the opportunity to get their vaccination
- Offer scheduled clinics vs. walk-in to avoid wait times
- Bring the vaccine to the employee – have a rolling cart and vaccinate on the job and at meetings
- Follow-up with employees who have not yet received the vaccine

Make getting the shot a positive experience:

- Provide privacy
- Provide education and be ready to answer questions
- Make the process quick
- Have consent forms ready (or declination forms)
- Give them a sticker/button to advertise their vaccination
- Offer an incentive (name in a draw for time off/prize, immediate reward [coffee, treat])
- Thank them for getting the shot!

Audit the Program

It is important to track doses given and calculate the percentage of employees who have been vaccinated. Post these numbers in a prominent area and update it weekly during the flu season. Perhaps you could create a poster to visually promote progress - compare this year's results with the past year to incent staff to achieve a higher rate.

Get Competitive!

Separate numbers by department and have a competition between departments for incentive! Reflect your numbers using a rate so large departments can compete with smaller ones. Make a game/quiz to promote flu vaccination and offer prizes.

Post Community Incidence

Keep your staff informed of what is happening in the community and province related to flu activity.

- York Region Influenza Activity – visit www.york.ca for influenza surveillance activities for the Region each season once influenza activity starts in the Region.
- The [Ontario Respiratory Pathogen Bulletin](#) is updated every Friday during influenza season (November to May), and these weekly reports include information on influenza activity in Ontario, case counts for new and total influenza cases (broken down by health unit), information on institutional outbreaks, dominant circulating respiratory viruses, archived bulletins and reports.

Evaluate and Celebrate

Keep staff informed of program success. Review with program members what strategies worked and get feedback from staff on what they liked. Share influenza rates with residents, family and visitors and be proud of your accomplishments. Plan to celebrate success if improvement is seen or a benchmark met.

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