



INFLUENZA VACCINATION

WHAT IS THE PUBLIC HEALTH ISSUE?

An average of about 36,000 deaths and 200,000 hospitalizations result each year in the United States from influenza infections. These infections occur in all age groups, but deaths are most frequent among persons aged 65 years or older.

In the 2006-2007 influenza season, a record number of doses of influenza vaccine was available for distribution in the United States. Prior to the season, manufacturers projected that up to 110-115 million doses would be produced, which exceeded the largest number of doses ever produced in a single season (95 million doses in 2002).

CDC works to influence influenza vaccine distribution and use through recommendations and guidelines and extensive collaborations. CDC is limited in what it can accomplish in this role because influenza vaccine distribution and administration are mostly a private sector enterprise. Challenges will continue as new groups are recommended for influenza vaccination and vaccine usage increases. CDC is committed to working closely with partners to develop strategies to address these challenges.

WHAT HAS CDC ACCOMPLISHED?

CDC collaborates with vaccine manufacturers, distributors, healthcare providers, and public health departments to identify pockets of need and underserved areas in need of vaccine. CDC develops and constantly updates provider and patient educational materials to encourage timely vaccination of high-priority groups, and participates in media events to highlight the benefits of influenza vaccination. These communications rely upon data from a strengthened influenza disease surveillance system that characterizes the degree and extent of influenza disease. CDC works with the influenza vaccine manufacturers and distributors to make vaccine distribution data available for state and local public health officials to assist them in managing vaccine supply shortages and disruptions as necessary.

As part of its most comprehensive partnership to promote seasonal influenza vaccination, the National Influenza Vaccine Summit (Summit), CDC and the American Medical Association hosts an annual meeting, with workgroup activities continuing throughout the year. The partnership includes more than 100 public and private organizations, representing private and public healthcare providers, vaccine manufacturers, professional medical and health organizations, community vaccinators, and state and local public health officials. Summit participants met twice during 2006 to review and assess the 2005-06 influenza season in terms of ordering/distribution challenges and to identify opportunities for the 2006-07 influenza season. The second meeting held in June 2006, focused on the promotion of late season vaccination and other strategies to make the best possible use of the large number of influenza vaccine doses anticipated for the 2006-07 influenza season.

In 2006, collaboration between CDC and business sector representatives to the Summit resulted in the development of several Seminars/Webinars targeted to the business community covering topics related to influenza. In addition, letters promoting vaccination to healthcare workers were broadly disseminated among healthcare facilities, hospitals, and healthcare workers. CDC also collaborated with the American College Health Association to promote vaccination of college students this season.

Between November 27 - December 3, 2006, DHHS and CDC sponsored the first annual National Influenza Vaccination Week to emphasize the importance of influenza vaccination and the need to continue vaccination activities beyond Thanksgiving and into December and January and beyond. The National Influenza Vaccine Summit was a key partner in this week.

WHAT ARE THE NEXT STEPS?

CDC will continue to work with other federal agencies, state and local health departments, and private and community partners to facilitate communication and collaboration about influenza vaccine supply and distribution; develop strategies to improve vaccination coverage among high-priority populations; and encourage providers to extend vaccination efforts into December and beyond. Efforts are also underway to address the unique supply issues associated with a seasonal vaccine that changes annually. CDC will continue to plan, prepare, and exercise responses to a possible occurrence of an influenza pandemic.

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