

Notice Date: November 18, 2021
To: All Ohio CareSource Providers
From: CareSource
Subject: Importance of the Flu Vaccination
Effective Date: November 18, 2021

Summary

Every winter, providers stress the importance of the flu vaccination. However, this year will be especially critical due to the COVID-19 pandemic. As a result, we are asking providers to reinforce the medical benefits to members of getting their flu vaccination this year.

Impact

Who is at high risk of flu-related complications?

The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) has published a list of people at high risk for developing flu-related complications. The list can be located at

https://www.cdc.gov/flu/highrisk/index.htm?CDC_AA_refVal=https://www.cdc.gov/flu/about/disease/high_risk.htm

The list includes:

- Adults 65 years of age or older
- Pregnant women
- Residents of nursing homes and other long term care facilities
- People who have medical conditions including asthma, chronic lung disease, heart disease and kidney disease.

Flu vaccination facts

- “Flu season” can last from early October to late May.
- The flu is easily spread on infected surfaces and via contact with others. The holiday togetherness increases the chance of spreading the flu. By getting a flu shot, members can reduce those chances, which means more time for holiday fun!

Importance

Benefits of the flu vaccination

- The sooner members get the flu vaccination, the sooner they are protected because it can take two weeks for full effect.
- It is important to get the flu vaccination every year! The flu viruses from last flu season will be different from the flu this season because the virus changes each year. As a result, members need a new vaccine every year for protection.

How to tell the difference between the flu and COVID

- Influenza (Flu) and COVID-19 are both contagious respiratory illnesses, but they are caused by different viruses. COVID-19 is caused by infection with a new coronavirus (called SARS-CoV-2), and the flu is caused by infection with influenza viruses.
- Common symptoms that COVID-19 and the flu share include:
 - fever or feeling feverish / chills
 - cough
 - shortness of breath or difficulty breathing
 - fatigue (tiredness)
 - sore throat
 - runny or stuffy nose
 - muscle pain or body aches
 - headache
 - vomiting and diarrhea (although these symptoms are more common in children)
- However, signs and symptoms of COVID-19 that are different from the flu may include a change in or loss of taste and smell. By receiving the flu vaccination, members could help reduce the confusion of symptoms of Influenza vs. COVID-19 and lessen the added strain on our health care system.

Questions?

If you have questions about the meeting or would like to ask questions, please call Provider Services at **1-800-488-0134**. As always, we thank our providers for their collaboration and support of our member's critical health care needs.

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