

Special Bulletin

For professional providers

November 25, 2024

National Influenza Vaccination Week (NIVW) – Dec. 2-6, 2024

Flu season has arrived, and it's crucial to encourage your patients to get vaccinated. Influenza activity typically peaks from October to May, with a new season beginning in early October.

Overcoming Patient Reluctance

Many patients are hesitant to receive their annual flu shot. What can you say to them to encourage them to overcome their resistance? Here are some points to emphasize when talking about flu shots and their benefits, including:

- **Reducing illness and complications** – The flu vaccine is the best way to protect patients from getting sick with the flu and experiencing serious complications like hospitalization.
- **Protecting vulnerable populations** – Vaccination is especially important for children under 5, pregnant women, older adults, and those with chronic health conditions.
- **Minimizing health care burden** – Vaccination can help reduce the strain on health care systems during flu season.

Key Recommendations

The more people who get vaccinated and are immunized, the better protected our communities will be.

- **Encourage annual vaccination:** Recommend the flu vaccine for all patients 6 months and older.
- **Prioritize high-risk groups:** Emphasize the importance of vaccination for children under 5, pregnant women, older adults, and those with chronic health conditions.
- **Share additional resources:** The Provider Resource Center has a variety of free patient educational resources, including a **Flu Flyer** and **Health Screening and Vaccination Tracker**, which are available [here](#). To order free copies for your office, use the [Inventory Request Form](#).

The following entities, which serve the noted regions, are independent licensees of the Blue Cross Blue Shield Association: Western and Northeastern PA: Highmark Inc. d/b/a Highmark Blue Cross Blue Shield, Highmark Choice Company, Highmark Health Insurance Company, Highmark Coverage Advantage Inc., Highmark Benefits Group Inc., First Priority Health, First Priority Life or Highmark Senior Health Company. Central and Southeastern PA: Highmark Inc. d/b/a Highmark Blue Shield, Highmark Benefits Group Inc., Highmark Health Insurance Company, Highmark Choice Company, or Highmark Senior Health Company. Delaware: Highmark BCBSD Inc. d/b/a Highmark Blue Cross Blue Shield. West Virginia: Highmark West Virginia Inc. d/b/a Highmark Blue Cross Blue Shield, Highmark Health Insurance Company, or Highmark Senior Solutions Company. Western NY: Highmark Western and Northeastern New York Inc. d/b/a Highmark Blue Cross Blue Shield. Northeastern NY: Highmark Western and Northeastern New York Inc. d/b/a Highmark Blue Shield.

All references to "Highmark" in this document are references to the Highmark company that is providing the member's health benefits or health benefit administration and/or to one or more of its affiliated Blue companies.

