

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
August 22, 2013

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CDC Modifies New Influenza Reporting Requirements Through Collaboration with AOHP

PITTSBURGH - The Association of Occupational Health Professionals in Healthcare (AOHP) recently provided feedback to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) which led to a change in the CDC's new influenza reporting requirements.

On August 18, 2011, the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) published a final rule in the Federal Register requiring acute care hospitals to report healthcare personnel influenza vaccination counts via the CDC's National Healthcare Safety Network (NHSN) for the CMS Hospital Inpatient Quality Reporting (IQR) Program. The tracking and reporting of the influenza vaccination status of healthcare personnel will assist the nation's healthcare facilities to identify and target unvaccinated personnel, which may result in reduced morbidity and mortality related to influenza virus infection among patients. Inaugural reporting began in 2013.

Within the first few months after implementation, AOHP leaders began receiving feedback from members that reporting on one of the four denominator requirements - capturing all healthcare personnel at risk of acquiring or transmitting healthcare-associated influenza infection - was exceedingly complex. The occupational health professionals responsible for this reporting were concerned about the amount of time required to collect this data, in addition to the level of accuracy.

In response to overwhelming member feedback, AOHP developed a short seven-question survey about the reporting requirement, which was answered by 261 members. Results of the survey were forwarded to the CDC in May 2013 with the goal of improving the influenza vaccine reporting process. The CDC informed AOHP two weeks later that the reporting measure had been revised, based on feedback from AOHP members and other users, to reduce the time and effort required to collect the data, and to more effectively capture the necessary information.

“Immunizations, which offer valuable protection to our healthcare personnel, are an integral component of the services we provide as occupational health professionals, and AOHP supports the tracking of influenza vaccination rates,” says Lydia F. Crutchfield, BSN RN, Director of Corporate Teammate Health for Carolinas Healthcare System in Charlotte, NC and a leader in AOHP who developed the survey. “AOHP appreciates the CDC's willingness to accept our feedback on this issue to enhance their influenza reporting initiative.”

“It’s important that we measure healthcare personnel vaccination in a way that produces accurate estimates without placing an excessive burden on reporting facilities,” said Megan Lindley, Deputy Associate Director for Science in the CDC’s Immunization Services Division. “The feedback we received from AOHP members and other hospitals about their experience using this measure was critical in helping us achieve this balance.”

AOHP is pleased to collaborate with the CDC in our work to ensure patient and healthcare worker safety. AOHP is a national association representing thousands of healthcare workers whose vision is to be the defining resource and leading advocate for occupational health and safety in healthcare. AOHP promotes health, safety and well-being for healthcare workers through: advocating for employee health and safety; occupational health education and networking opportunities; health and safety advancement through best practice and research; and partnering with employers, regulatory agencies and related associations.

For more information about AOHP, contact Judy Lyle, AOHP Executive Director, at 800-362-4347.

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