Employee Influenza Immunization Program

National Influenza Immunization Summit
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Nancy W. Gemeinhart RN, MHA, CIC

Topics of Discussion

• Background
• Meeting recommendations
• BJC HealthCare’s policy
• Vaccination outcomes
Background

Influenza Facts

- Infects up to 20% population in U.S.
- 36,000 deaths in the U.S. annually
- More than 226,000 excess hospitalizations
- Leading cause of vaccine-preventable death in U.S. every year
- Asymptomatic infections occur
- Viral shedding precedes symptom onset
- Healthcare workers (HCW) work ill
Influenza Impact on Health Care

- Healthcare-associated transmission: increases morbidity, mortality, and length of stay
- Increased census and employee absenteeism
- Additional $1-$3 billion in health care costs in the U.S.
- Exposure evaluations are costly and labor-intensive

HCW Influenza Immunization

- US Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (ACIP)
- Recommended for HCWs since 1981
- Purpose: prevent healthcare-associated transmission
- Nationally, HCW immunization rates remain low
  - 44.4% in 2006 – 07; 49% in 2007 – 08
  - 2009 H1N1: 39.3%
Recommendations to Increase HCW Vaccination Rates

- ACIP, HICPAC, Joint Commission, Professional Organizations (APIC, SHEA, IDSA)
  - Vaccinate unless contraindication or actively decline
  - Use effective and proven approaches to increase rates: education, free, convenient, leadership, incentives/ rewards, champion
  - Measure and report vaccination rates
  - Hold organized campaigns
  - Declination statements
  - Consider rates a measure of patient safety quality

Mandatory HCW Influenza Immunization

- Pros and cons
  - HCW autonomy vs. patient safety
- Rationale:
  - Protect patients, public, and HCWs
  - Other mandatory vaccines for HCWs (MMR, Varicella)
  - First, do no harm
  - Safe vaccine
  - Inadequacy of years of voluntary efforts
BJC HealthCare

- Large non-profit healthcare organization
- 13 acute care hospitals in Missouri and Illinois
  - Urban, suburban, rural
  - 3,259 staffed beds (range 40 – 1,074)
  - Two teaching hospitals (1 adult, 1 pediatric)
- 3 long-term care facilities
- Home care, medical group, behavioral health, occupational medicine
- >26,800 employees

Meeting The Recommendations
BJC HCW Influenza Immunization

• Comprehensive program since 1997 (always free)
• 2003 – 2006 established a “Best Practice”
  – Standardized and systematic
  – Promote maximum employee participation
  – Make vaccine convenient
  – Utilize partners to administer vaccine
  – Advertise and communicate
  – Education: benefits and risks, dispel myths
  – Offer incentives
  – Catchy themes
  – Monitor participation and report rates to key stakeholders

Campaign Themes
Challenges With a Best Practice Approach

- Time consuming
- Long immunization time period
- Easy for HCWs to say “no”
- Increase in participation was incremental

Declination Statements

- Pilot in 2006
- Meet JC Standard
  - Education
  - Survey for improvement
- Unvaccinated HCWs, can transmit influenza
- Annual HCW vaccination rates between 40 – 54% from 1997-2006
Vaccination Rates, Quality Measure

- 2007 add HCW influenza immunization rates to a quality scorecard

- Best In Class scorecard (BIC)

- Target set at 80%

- Challenges
  - Time consuming
  - Tracking down employees
  - Long campaign

BIC Results

- Overall 71.1% (range 51%-87%) vaccinated (18,039/25,380)

- 16% (4,071) signed declination statements

- 13% (3,270) neither vaccinated nor signed statement

- Conclusion: did not achieve established goal
Working Toward Mandatory Immunizations

- Change the culture
  - Develop acceptance
  - Change management principles
  - ACT!™ Accelerating Change and Transitions

- Develop a policy and procedure
  - Develop a quality product
  - Focus on consistency

BJC HealthCare’s Influenza Immunization Policy
BJC Approach and Development

- Purpose/initiative – Patient Safety
- Policy Owner – Human Resources
- Implementation process owner – Occupational Health and Infection Prevention

BJC Influenza Immunization Policy

- Purpose: Protect patients, employees, employees’ family members and the community from influenza infection through annual immunization
- Coverage:
  - All BJC HealthCare employees, with and without direct patient care
  - Contracted clinical personnel – those with direct contact with patients or patient environment
  - Volunteers
BJC Influenza Immunization Policy

• Program coordination – Occupational Health

• Timeframe for compliance
  – Begin October 15th
  – End December 15th

• New hires
  – Vaccinated through March 31st
  – Those who refused, refer back to HR

BJC Influenza Immunization Policy

• Vaccinated at other locations must provide proof of vaccination

• Proof may include:
  – Receipt
  – Physician note
  – Copy of consent
BJC Influenza Immunization Policy

• Medical exemption requests made to occupational health (OH)
  – Required a statement from personal physician (MD/DO)
  – Standard criteria based on CDC guidelines, manufacturer recommendations
  – Questionable requests reviewed by medical director
  – Requests outside of established criteria denied
  – Employee notified in writing within 5 business days

• Type of medical exemptions
  – Temporary exemptions
  – Permanent exemptions (i.e., allergy or history of Guillain-Barré after a previous influenza vaccine)

BJC Influenza Immunization Policy

• Requests for religious accommodation provided in writing to Human Resources
  – Letter of request from the employee
  – Employee notified in writing within 5 business days
  – Must apply for religious accommodation each year
BJC Influenza Immunization Policy

• Exempt employees requested / encouraged mask use
  – Patient care areas, when within 3 feet of patients
  – During influenza season in their area
  – Exact dates determined annually based on influenza in community
  – Timeframe determined by medical director

BJC Influenza Immunization Policy

• Compliance is a “Condition of Employment”

• Vaccination or exemption deadline – December 15th

• Management of non-compliant HCWs
  – Non-compliant – Suspended for 30 days without pay (if already on final warning – terminated)
  – If non-compliant after 30 days – Employment terminated (January 14th)
Vaccination Outcomes

BJC HealthCare 2008 Results

- Policy Compliance: 99.96%

- Active Employees:
  - Vaccinated: 98.4%
  - Medical Exemptions: 1.24%
  - Religious Accommodations: 0.35%
  - Non-compliance: 0.03%

- Rate of vaccine eligible employees: 99.97%
2008 Results

Percent of Participation

- BJC Rate
- NHS Rate

2009 Immunization Program

- Policy enhancements
  - Included students and vendors
  - Implemented standard medical exemption request form

- Seasonal influenza vaccination
  - 97.8% vaccinated
  - 2.1% exempt/accommodation
  - 99.9% policy compliant
2009 Results

H1N1 Immunization

- Decision to include H1N1 or not
  - “It’s the flu, right? We have a vaccine, right?”

- Different deadline for compliance
  - Local health department standards
  - Vaccine availability

- Outcomes
  - 96.8% vaccinated
  - 2.9% exempt
  - 99.7% policy compliant
In Conclusion

A Note From Steve
Why is BJC requiring flu vaccinations?

“We know how to prevent flu. We know how to protect patients and co-workers from getting the flu. We should use everything we know to make sure that our patients have every opportunity to get better. After all, that’s why we do what we do.”

- Steve Lipstein, BJC President and CEO