
Program Memorandum Intermediaries/Carriers

Department of Health &
Human Services (DHHS)
Centers for Medicare &
Medicaid Services (CMS)

Transmittal AB-02-147

Date: NOVEMBER 1, 2002

CHANGE REQUEST 2396

SUBJECT: Promoting Influenza Vaccinations

The 2002-2003 Flu season will begin soon. This year the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention report that they do not anticipate influenza vaccine shortages or delays. Manufacturers of the vaccine are currently meeting their production goals. To date, 94.9 million doses have been produced, which exceeds the 87.7 million doses that were produced in the 2001-02 influenza season. The challenge this year is to increase demand for the vaccine to make sure that all that is produced is used.

Each year about 114,000 people in the U.S. are hospitalized and about 20,000 people die because of the flu. Most who die are over 65 years old. An annual vaccination against the flu is the best way to reduce hospitalizations and deaths from flu complications. U.S. immunization rates have increased but have far to go. In 1999, influenza immunization rates for persons aged 65 and older were 66.9 percent – double the 1989 immunization rate of 33 percent. One of the Leading Health Indicators established by Healthy People 2010 targets raising immunization rates to reach 90 percent for persons aged 65 and older.

To accomplish this goal, CMS requires Carriers and Fiscal Intermediaries' assistance in publishing the following messages to beneficiaries on their Medicare Summary Notifications during the times indicated.

From November 1, 2002, through November 30, 2002:

- 38.4- (E) You are at high risk for complications from the flu and it is very important that you get vaccinated. Please contact your local health care provider for the flu vaccine.
- 38.4- (S) Usted corre un alto riesgo de contraer la influenza y es muy importante que se vacune. Favor de comunicarse con su doctor u otro proveedor del cuidado de la salud para recibir la vacuna contra la influenza.

From December 1, 2002, through December 31, 2002:

- 38.5- (E) If you have not received your flu vaccine it is not too late. Please contact your health care provider about getting the flu vaccine.
- 38.5- (S) Si usted no ha sido vacunado contra la influenza, todavía tiene tiempo. Favor de comunicarse con su doctor u otro proveedor del cuidado de la salud para recibir la vacuna contra la influenza.

The *effective date* for this Program Memorandum (PM) is November 1, 2002.

The *implementation date* for this PM is no later than November 8, 2002.

These instructions should be implemented within your current operating budget.

This PM may be discarded after August 1, 2003.

If you have any questions, contact Elisa H. Gladstone at 410-786-2225.

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