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Update on Shortage of Seasonal Influenza Vaccine in Long-term Care

October 16, 2009

ASCP Member Survey Results

During the week of October 12, the American Society of Consultant Pharmacists (ASCP) conducted an email survey of members to determine the extent of the problem of difficulty in acquiring adequate supplies of seasonal influenza vaccine. Members from 30 states responded to the survey, and 90.8% of respondents indicated that supplies of influenza vaccine had not been received or only partial shipments had been received. Members reported hearing from suppliers that they might not receive ordered vaccine supplies, or that suppliers had no idea when additional vaccine supplies might be available.

Compliance with State Operations Manual

The State Operations Manual (SOM) includes language to provide for situations where influenza vaccine is in short supply. See excerpt below. The CMS central office is currently preparing a memo to state survey agencies to alert them to the influenza vaccine shortage, and confirm that facilities **should not be cited for a deficiency because of inability to obtain influenza vaccine.**

Here is an excerpt from the SOM:

NOTE: (For surveys occurring during influenza season) - Unavailability of the influenza vaccine can be a valid reason why a facility has not implemented the influenza vaccine program, especially during the early weeks of the influenza season. It is also likely that a facility surveyed during October may not have administered the vaccine, yet. In these instances, ask the facility to demonstrate that:

- The vaccine has been ordered and the facility received either the vaccine or a confirmation of the order indicating that the vaccine has been shipped or that the product is not available but will be shipped when the supply is available;
- Plans are developed on how and when the vaccines are to be administered;
- Residents have been screened to determine how many and which residents are eligible and wish to receive the vaccine; and
- Education regarding immunizations has been implemented.

ASCP is regularly updating their influenza web page at: <http://www.ascp.com/flu>