

Long-Term Care Survey Alert

Reader Feedback: Find Out How This SNF Is Handling Staff Flu Vaccinations

Also find out what CMS rep has to say on this issue.

In response to the article on influenza vaccination in the last Long-Term Care Survey Alert, **Barb Hulwick, RN**, reported that the SNF where she works is requiring all staff to get the flu vaccine by Dec. 30.

"So far, 80 percent of staff have received it," says Hulwick, clinical care coordinator for Kalkaska Eden Center, which is affiliated with Munson Medical Center in Traverse City, Mich. (The flu vaccination policy applies to employees, medical staff who have privileges at the SNF, and volunteers, according to an organization spokesperson.)

"If someone has a medical or religious reason, etc., for refusing the vaccine, they have to see the infectious disease doctor at the hospital," Hulwick explains. She notes that "a number of staff have expressed concerns about receiving the flu vaccine, such as the preservatives in the vaccine, etc. We have been able to find studies and FAQs to address all of their concerns," Hulwick adds.

CMS weighs in on flu vaccinations: The agency's **Tom Dudley** relayed during the Oct. 20 SNF/LTC Open Door Forum that he "really can't emphasize enough that vaccinating just your residents is not enough. The staff really need to be encouraged to get vaccinated, too, to protect the residents you're taking care of, as well as to avoid staff illnesses and inadequate staff."

Dudley also noted that the CDC has a website that "may be helpful so you can see the number of flu cases in your area" (www.cdc.gov/flu/weekly/usmap.htm).