

Health-care Providers and Patients 65 Years and Older Have a New Option in the Fight Against Influenza Disease for the Coming Influenza Season

Fluzone[®] High-Dose, Influenza Virus Vaccine Licensed, Recommended, Covered by Medicare Part B, and Available for the 2010-2011 Influenza Season

Adults 65 years of age and older are among the groups hardest hit by influenza, and annual vaccination remains the best protection, particularly for this population. However, as people age, their immune function tends to decrease, which makes older adults not only more susceptible to infections, but also less responsive to vaccination. Although this group has the highest rates of annual immunization, they may not respond to standard-dose influenza vaccine as well as younger adults.¹ On average in the US it is estimated that 90% of the 36,000 annual deaths attributed to influenza and its complications are in people 65 years of age and older.²

In December 2009, the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) licensed sanofi pasteur's *Fluzone High-Dose vaccine*, which contains an increased amount of antigen compared to standard-dose influenza vaccines, and is designed to help generate a stronger immune response in people 65 years of age and older. Please click here to view the full FDA announcement:

<http://www.fda.gov/NewsEvents/Newsroom/PressAnnouncements/2009/ucm195483.htm>

The new 2010-2011 annual influenza vaccination recommendations issued by the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) have included Fluzone High-Dose vaccine among the vaccines recommended for adults 65 years of age and older. Please click here to view the ACIP recommendations for the use of *Fluzone High-Dose vaccine*: <http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/mm5916a2.htm>

Fluzone High-Dose vaccine is also a payable benefit under Medicare Part B. Recently, the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) updated its various pricing files to include *Fluzone High-Dose vaccine* in the "July 2010 AWP NDC - HCPCS Crosswalk File" for Medicare Part B Drugs. The AWP file identifies physician administered vaccines and drugs that are payable services under Medicare Part B. Please click here to view the CMS AWP File:

http://www.cms.gov/apps/ama/license.asp?file=/McrPartBDrugAvgSalesPrice/downloads/July_2010_ASP_NDC_HCPCS_Crosswalk.zip

Fluzone High-Dose vaccine now provides health-care providers another important option in the fight against influenza for patients 65 years of age and older. Health-care providers can now reserve *Fluzone High-Dose vaccine* in preparation for the upcoming 2010-2011 influenza season. Please [call/click here] for additional information regarding this vaccine or how this vaccine can be reserved.

References: 1. Monto AS, Ansaldi F, Aspinall R, et al. Influenza control in the 21st century: optimizing protection of older adults. *Vaccine*. 2009;27:5043 2. Poland GA, Mulligan MJ. The imperative of influenza vaccines for elderly individuals—an evolving story. *J Infect Dis*. 2009;200:61-163.