October 15, 2020

Re: Flu Vaccine Notice: Access to Pharmacy Vaccine Network

Dear IEHP Provider:

As of August 2020, SARS-CoV-2 continues to circulate and cause severe illness. The extent to which SARS-CoV-2 will circulate over the course of the 2020–21 influenza season is unknown. However, during the continued circulation of SARS-CoV-2 concurrently with influenza viruses during the upcoming fall and winter, influenza symptoms can be confused with symptoms of COVID-19. Vaccinations of persons aged ≥ 6 months can help reduce the prevalence of influenza and the symptom confusion with COVID-19. Now is the time to act to help ease the severity of the flu on our community and alleviate stress on the U.S. health care system. IEHP is actively working on Member outreach and flu vaccine education.

This year, IEHP Medi-Cal who are over 18 years old and all IEHP DualChoice Members may obtain flu vaccines through the IEHP Pharmacy Vaccine Network. Please note that Members who are under 18 years old must obtain their Vaccines for Children (VFC)-covered vaccines through their Primary Care Physician’s (PCP) office. A Pharmacy Vaccine Network listing is available on our website at www.iehp.org.

As a reminder on August 21, 2020, the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) published the updated recommendations on the use of influenza vaccine for the 2020-2021 influenza season. A summary of the changes and updated recommendations are as follows:

- Routine annual influenza vaccination of all persons aged ≥ 6 months who do not have contraindications continues to be recommended. No preferential recommendation is made for one influenza vaccine product over another for persons for whom more than one licensed, recommended, and appropriate product is available.

- 2020-2021 U.S. influenza vaccines includes updates to:
  - Influenza A(H1N1)pdm09, influenza A(H3N2), and influenza B/Victoria lineage components

- Two new influenza vaccines both licensed for persons aged ≥ 65
  - Fluzone High-Dose Quadrivalent
  - Fluar Quadrivalent

- Updated discussion on the following:
  - Contraindications and precautions for the use of influenza vaccination
  - Use of live attenuated influenza vaccine (LAIV4) in the setting of influenza antiviral
o medication use
o Recommendations concerning vaccinations of persons with egg allergy who receive either cell culture based IIV4 (ccIIV4) or RIV4.

For more detailed information regarding the new recommendations of 2020-2021 flu season, please visit:
https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/69/rr/rr6908a1.htm

It is important to know that the availability of adult vaccines varies among Pharmacies. Please refer our IEHP Members to one of our Pharmacy Vaccine Network Providers to receive an immunization by utilizing our Pharmacy Vaccine Network list and advise Members to call the Pharmacy in advance for scheduling and availability of the vaccine. Although a prescription is not necessary, it is also advised that you provide a prescription in case the Pharmacy lacks a protocol to initiate a prescription.

It will take all of us coming together to mitigate the impact of the flu this year. We can make the difference. Our team at IEHP thanks you, our Providers, for all you do each day to care for the most vulnerable in our community. Should you have any questions regarding the above, please call Provider Relations at (909) 890-2054.

Sincerely,

Karen Hansberger, MD
Chief Medical Officer