

Flu Shots: Provider Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

(Last updated 7/18/11)

Question	Answer
1. Who should get a flu shot?	<p>The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices recommends flu vaccination for all persons 6 months of age and older who have no contraindication (e.g. egg allergy).</p> <p>If you have limited supply of vaccine, consider vaccinating high-risk patients first such as those over 50 and those with a health condition. Vaccinating the people around high-risk patients, particularly children and caregivers, who are likely to bring flu into the household will also protect these high-risk patients.</p>
2. Does SCAN recommend flu shots for its members?	<p>Yes. Vaccination to prevent seasonal flu is particularly important for persons aged 50 and over, and those who have a health condition that puts them at increased risk for severe complications from influenza. This subgroup is at higher risk for influenza-related outpatient, emergency department, or hospital visits. In the US, seasonal flu is associated with more than 49,000 deaths and more than 200,000 hospitalizations; most of these are older adults and people with chronic health problems. Seasonal flu shots are a very cost-effective medical intervention; shots are an inexpensive, highly effective way to prevent costly hospitalizations and death in older adults.</p>
3. What about H1N1?	<p>The H1N1 antigen is part of the 2011–2012 trivalent seasonal flu vaccine. A separate vaccine will not be needed to protect against Pandemic H1N1 flu. A single trivalent vaccine will protect your patients from the flu virus strains that are mostly likely to circulate.</p>
4. Are flu shots a covered benefit?	<p>Yes. Seasonal flu shots are a Medicare covered benefit (Part B) when administered by the member's assigned SCAN primary care physician or by his/her assigned Physician Group.</p>
5. Is the live, intranasal influenza vaccine (aka LAIV) a covered benefit?	<p>No. The nasal spray form of the seasonal flu vaccine is not recommended for adults 50 years and older or for people at high risk for flu complications.</p>

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6. When should the flu shot be given?	Because seasonal flu typically peaks in January and February, providers are encouraged to give flu shots from September to February (or later) as recommended by the CDC. The 2011 seasonal vaccine is expected to be available in early Fall. If you need to order please contact one of the companies named here .
7. Is there a co-payment for the flu shot?	No.
8. Will SCAN be offering flu shots to members?	Only through SCAN's network providers. Members must go to their assigned physician or physician group flu clinic to get their seasonal flu shots. SCAN will not purchase nor administer seasonal flu shots directly to members.
9. Can members get reimbursed if they get their flu shot in the community from a local pharmacy, senior center or other non-network provider?	SCAN will not directly reimburse members who get flu shots from non-network providers since vaccines are covered under the payment arrangement between SCAN and its contracted medical groups. If the provider has run out of vaccine they may direct the member to another provider with whom their medical group has established a payment arrangement. Or the medical group may set up a system or process by which they will accept member receipts for reimbursement.
10. As a SCAN-contracted provider, can I bill SCAN for giving flu shots to SCAN members?	No. Administration of vaccines is covered under the payment arrangement between SCAN and its contracted medical groups. Inquiries regarding reimbursement for flu shots should be directed to your contracted medical group.
11. As a non-contracted provider, can I bill SCAN for giving flu shots to SCAN members?	No, SCAN does not pay for flu shots administered by non-contracted, non-network providers. Non-contracted providers will not be able to bill Medicare either, as member has signed over their Medicare coverage to SCAN. There may be situations in which a member's medical group has directed the member to the non-contracted, non-network provider. In that case, the medical group (see answers #9 and #10 above) will have established a payment arrangement with the provider or with the member for reimbursement. Any flu shot claims submitted to SCAN will be sent to the responsible medical group for payment consideration.
12. Our office/medical group ran out of vaccine or did not get any vaccine. What should we do?	You can order additional vaccine. Check here to find out which manufacturers have vaccine in stock. If you will not be ordering additional vaccine you may direct members to another provider (e.g. retail pharmacy, public health clinic) if your medical group has established a payment arrangement with that provider or has

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	established a system to reimburse members.
13. How will SCAN publicize flu shots?	SCAN actively promotes seasonal flu vaccination in our member newsletters, website , during our annual Member Straight Talk forums, via case management assessments and in letters sent directly to select high-risk members. SCAN will maintain a database for our staff's reference with specific information we have received about how a provider group plans to administer seasonal flu shots. Staff will use this database to inform inquiring members about obtaining their seasonal flu shot. If a contracted medical group has not given SCAN information about clinics or other plans for vaccination, we will instruct members to contact their Primary Care Physician's office for information. Physicians and medical groups are encouraged to fax or email vaccination plans and/or schedules to Melissa Belluz or fax to 562-997-1876 for inclusion in the database.
14. Can members use SCAN transportation to get to a flu clinic or a providers office?	Some benefit plans cover transportation to/from medical appointments and services. (Ride limits may apply.) Members can use the transportation service if his/her plan includes transportation and they have not exhausted their annual transportation benefit limit .
15. Does SCAN recommend flu shots for caregivers?	Yes, SCAN follows the CDC's recommendation that all persons who live with or care for persons at high risk for influenza-related complications should receive the seasonal influenza vaccine annually.
16. Will SCAN offer flu vouchers/coupons for members or caregivers of SCAN members?	No.
17. Does SCAN have patient educational materials about flu?	Yes. We encourage you to use our online health library. Print in your office or direct patients to www.scanhealthplan.com/flu (Also available in Spanish www.scanhealthplan.com/gripe)
18. What is Fluzone HD?	Fluzone HD is a high-dose inactivated influenza vaccine with four times the amount of antigen from each of the three influenza strains contained in regular flu vaccines. Fluzone HD is currently FDA-approved for people 65 years of age and older based on a higher immune response elicited by its higher antigen content compared with regular flu vaccines.

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19. Does Fluzone HD provide greater protection against flu than regular flu shots?	Available clinical studies comparing Fluzone to Fluzone High-Dose among persons aged 65 years or older indicate that a stronger immune response (i.e. higher antibody levels) occurs after vaccination with Fluzone High-Dose. Studies are currently underway to determine whether there is also greater protection against influenza disease with use of Fluzone High-Dose compared to Fluzone. These are multi-year studies expected to be completed in 2012. Per ACIP (Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices) and CDC (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention), there is no preference for use of Fluzone HD over regular flu shots in seniors. The CDC has more info on their website at http://www.cdc.gov/flu/protect/vaccine/qa_fluzone.htm .
20. Is the risk of adverse drug reactions higher with Fluzone HD than with regular flu shots?	Yes. There appears to be a higher risk for non-serious side effects such as headache, fever and injection site pain with Fluzone HD compared with regular flu vaccines.

**Other information about the 2011-2012 flu season can be found at www.scanhealthplan.com/flushots (for providers) and at www.scanhealthplan.com/fluinfo (for members). Providers who need additional information about flu shots should contact their assigned Provider Services Representative at SCAN.