

Meals on Wheels as a Vehicle for Influenza Vaccination For the Homebound



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Background:

In order to fit the needs of the population that public health providers serve, rethinking and revising our efforts regarding flu vaccination is necessary. The major challenges of access to and availability of vaccine can be confronted if we are willing to be innovative.

The traditional locations for receiving vaccination such as the medical office, local health department, and even the pharmacy can be very difficult to get to for those who are homebound. And while there are some who receive attention through home health agencies, there are homebound who have a lower visibility, yet have the same need for protection from the flu through vaccination. How do we locate this group?

Aim of Project:

To provide flu vaccination to homebound Natick residents and their household family/caregivers

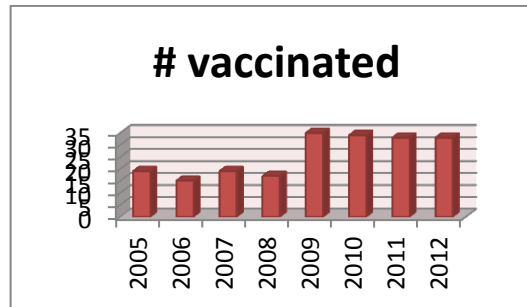
Summary of Interventions:

- Initial Meeting of Public Health Nurse (PHN) and Council on Aging Outreach Coordinator (OC), who oversees Meals on Wheels (MOW) program
- Letter explaining Home Vaccination Program; distributed to MOW recipients via delivery driver; completed tear-off form given back to driver by those interested
- Responses collected and referred to PHN
- Appointment set up at resident's home by PHN; Flu shots also offered to household members



Lessons learned:

- The importance of seeking out the less-visible homebound for flu immunization cannot be underestimated.
- Public health care providers need to identify ways to locate those who do not participate in community services like MOW. My goal is to devise additional strategies to locate this vulnerable population.
- Working together with partners such as the Council on Aging underscores the value of such relationships.
- **Conclusions:**
- Vulnerable populations like the homebound are not always obvious or visible to public health workers. It is necessary to creatively seek them out for vaccination.
- Giving household caregivers the opportunity to get flu vaccinations is important in the prevention of influenza.
- Community partnerships are valuable in carrying out this program.



Summary of Results:

2005: 19 vaccinated

2012: 33 vaccinated

74% increase

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Dear Meals on Wheels Recipient,

Influenza season will be here soon! It is very important that you protect yourself by getting a Flu Shot.

This fall, the Public Health Nurse from the Natick Health Department will be going to visit to homebound Natick residents and their household families. There is no charge for the shot or the visit to your home. If you have Medicare or other health insurance, please have your card available when the nurse comes so that the Health Department can receive reimbursement for your shot.

If you would like to receive your flu shot in your home, please complete the form below and give it to your Meals on Wheels driver, or call Debbie Bland, the Outreach Coordinator, at 508-647-6400. The Public Health Nurse will then contact you to set up an appointment.

Here's to staying healthy this flu season!

Who needs a flu vaccine?
All 65+ (65, 66, 67, 68, 69, 70, 71, 72, 73, 74, 75, 76, 77, 78, 79, 80, 81, 82, 83, 84, 85, 86, 87, 88, 89, 90, 91, 92, 93, 94, 95, 96, 97, 98, 99, 100)

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Complete, detach and give to your Meals on Wheels Driver.
I am a homebound resident of Natick. I would like to receive a Flu Shot in my home by the Public Health Nurse.
Name: _____
Address: _____
Phone: _____
The Public Health Nurse will contact you to set up an appointment to receive your shot.

