



Friday 22 June 2018

For queries please contact:

- by email -

The Presidents of:

- Academy of Medical Royal Colleges
- Royal College of Midwives
- Royal College of Nursing
- Academy for Healthcare Science
- Allied Health Professions Federation

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Dear Colleague

Seasonal flu vaccination for health care professionals

We know flu can have serious and even fatal consequences, especially for vulnerable patients. As we prepare for the coming winter we would like to invite you, as leaders in your professions, to consider the evidence base and advise us on how you can and will increase maximum vaccination uptake by your members, particularly those working with high risk patients.

We believe healthcare professionals have a duty to protect themselves, their patients, their colleagues and their families by being vaccinated. There are strong reasons why colleagues should wish to be vaccinated:

- evidence clearly shows that 70% of confirmed influenza infections are subclinical (ie asymptomatic)
- unvaccinated, asymptomatic (but nevertheless infected) staff may pass on the virus to vulnerable patients
- the forthcoming evidence review from the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) highlights a direct link between staff vaccination rates and patient mortality rates
- flu-related staff sickness affects service delivery, impacting on patients and on other staff – evidence shows a 10% increase in vaccination is associated with a 10% fall in sickness absence rates.

We are pleased that last year the number of care workers vaccinated against seasonal flu increased by 5% to around 69%, but this is below optimal levels and hides the unsatisfactory variation between trusts of 38.9% to 92.3%. We wish to see significant further improvements this year.

Recognising that some patient groups, such as the immunocompromised, are at greater risk from flu, we have commissioned Public Health England (PHE) to advise on the flu risks to patients in differing clinical settings from unvaccinated staff. We have asked PHE to share the results of this work with you in early July.

We invite you to consider this evidence in the context of what it means for good clinical and wider professional practice for your members, and to advise us on the actions you propose to encourage maximum flu vaccination uptake.

We would be grateful if you could write back outlining your thoughts and proposals by 20 July. We will look to arrange a meeting during the last week of July.

In parallel, we are seeking the views of patient representatives about their expectations of staff in relation to seasonal flu vaccination, and will be happy to share these findings with you.

Yours truly,



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