

NEW MEXICO HEALTH ALERT NETWORK (HAN) HEALTH ADVISORY
New Mexico Data Show Opportunity to Improve High-dose Influenza Vaccination for Patients 65 years and Older and Early Antiviral Use for Patients Hospitalized with Influenza in New Mexico

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Summary

Healthcare providers in New Mexico can improve coverage with lifesaving vaccines and antivirals for influenza this season. Influenza vaccination coverage among adults ≥ 65 years old in New Mexico has increased between the previous two seasons, but at 63% this high-risk population remains below the full population Healthy People 2030 target of 70%. There was an increase in high-dose vaccine administered after the ACIP recommended high-dose vaccine for adults ≥ 65 years old last season, however, 22% of those vaccinated last season received a standard dose. Documented antiviral use for New Mexicans hospitalized with influenza decreased slightly between 2021-22 and 2022-23 influenza seasons both overall (82% vs. 77%) and within 48 hours of diagnosis (79% vs. 71%).

Background

Influenza virus circulation in the United States typically occurs seasonally, with infections most common from late fall to early spring. We are currently seeing influenza infections rising rapidly in New Mexico. While most people who become ill with influenza will recover without serious complications, many develop serious illness leading to hospitalization or death. To reduce the impact of influenza, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), many professional organizations, and the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) recommend annual influenza vaccination for all individuals aged ≥ 6 months who do not have contraindications. Additionally, antiviral treatment can reduce severity and death from influenza for adults hospitalized with influenza illness.

In August 2022 the ACIP updated its recommendations for influenza vaccination in adults ≥ 65 years old recommending that all adults in this age group preferentially receive high-dose or adjuvanted influenza vaccinations, specifically: quadrivalent high-dose inactivated influenza vaccine (e.g. Fluzone High-Dose Quadrivalent), quadrivalent recombinant influenza vaccine (e.g. Flublok Quadrivalent), or quadrivalent adjuvanted inactivated influenza vaccine (e.g., Fluad Quadrivalent). A new analysis by the New Mexico Department of Health (NMDOH) finds that there is room to improve the use of high-dose influenza vaccination and the early use of antiviral medications for patients hospitalized with influenza.

The full study can be reviewed here: [High-dose Vaccination and Use of Antiviral Drugs for Influenza Hospitalizations: New Mexico 2021-2023](#). Additional findings included that Hispanic residents, who represent 33% of New Mexico residents ≥ 65 years old, had the lowest influenza vaccination rates (53%) and lowest uptake of the high-dose vaccine (38%) in the 2022-23 season. High-dose influenza vaccination rates increased the most between seasons for American Indian/Alaska Native residents (34% to 63%). This may reflect the impact of health system policy changes within the Indian Health Service and tribal health leadership support for vaccination.

Recommendations for Clinicians:

As a trusted source of information impacting patient decisions, healthcare providers should encourage vaccinations against respiratory infections, including the use of high-dose influenza vaccines for persons 65 years and older. The analysis suggests that office policies and support of community health leaders can improve the uptake of recommended vaccines. There is a particular unmet need in our Hispanic community in New Mexico. In hospitalized patients, providers can improve health outcomes by early use of proper antiviral medications.

Resources Providers can share with the Public:

Interactive map to schedule a Flu vaccine appointment. <https://vaccine.doh.nm.gov/>

If you need help scheduling an appointment, please call the DOH Helpline at 1-833-SWNURSE (1-833-796-8773), which operates from 7 a.m.-8 p.m. Monday-Friday and 10 a.m.-4 p.m. on weekends.

To view your vaccine record- <https://vaxview.doh.nm.gov/> If you need access assistance, please call NMSIIS Helpdesk at 1-833-882-6454.

NMDOH Adult Immunizations-[Immunization for Adults \(nmhealth.org\)](https://www.nmhealth.org/immunization-for-adults)

Additional Resources:

Respiratory Diseases

- [NMDOH Viral Respiratory Infection Dashboard \(shinyapps.io\)](https://shinyapps.io/nmdoh-viral-respiratory-infection-dashboard/)
- [Respiratory Disease Activity | CDC](https://www.cdc.gov/respiratory-disease-activity/)
- [Protect Yourself and Others from COVID-19, Flu, and RSV | CDC](https://www.cdc.gov/protect-yourself-and-others-from-covid-19-flu-and-rsv/)
- [Healthcare Provider Toolkit: Preparing Your Patients for the Fall and Winter Virus Season | CDC](https://www.cdc.gov/healthcare-provider-toolkit-preparing-your-patients-for-the-fall-and-winter-virus-season/)

Influenza

- [FluVaxView: Weekly Flu Vaccination Dashboard | CDC](https://www.cdc.gov/flu-vaxview-weekly-flu-vaccination-dashboard/)
- [How to Prevent Flu | CDC](https://www.cdc.gov/how-to-prevent-flu/)
- [Who Needs a Flu Vaccine | CDC](https://www.cdc.gov/who-needs-a-flu-vaccine/)
- [Flu Vaccines Work | CDC](https://www.cdc.gov/flu-vaccines-work/)
- [Getting a Flu Vaccine and Other Recommended Vaccines at the Same Time | CDC](https://www.cdc.gov/getting-a-flu-vaccine-and-other-recommended-vaccines-at-the-same-time/)
- [Flu Activity and Surveillance | CDC](https://www.cdc.gov/flu-activity-and-surveillance/)
- [Influenza Surveillance \(nmhealth.org\)](https://www.nmhealth.org/influenza-surveillance/)
- [Information for Health Professionals | CDC](https://www.cdc.gov/information-for-health-professionals/)
- [Information for Clinicians on Influenza Virus Testing | CDC](https://www.cdc.gov/information-for-clinicians-on-influenza-virus-testing/)
- [Flu Treatment | CDC](https://www.cdc.gov/flu-treatment/)
- [Summary of Influenza Antiviral Treatment Recommendations for Clinicians | CDC](https://www.cdc.gov/summary-of-influenza-antiviral-treatment-recommendations-for-clinicians/)
- [Prevention and Control of Seasonal Influenza with Vaccines: Recommendations of the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices — United States, 2023–24 Influenza Season | MMWR \(cdc.gov\)](https://www.cdc.gov/prevention-and-control-of-seasonal-influenza-with-vaccines-recommendations-of-the-advisory-committee-on-immunization-practices-united-states-2023-24-influenza-season/)

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