

**RETROSPECTIVE DUR INTERVENTION NOTICE: INFLUENZA VACCINATION AND ASTHMA**

10/16/2014

Dear Medicaid provider,

The New York State Medicaid Drug Utilization Review (DUR) Program, in collaboration with the State University of New York at Buffalo School of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences, retrospectively reviews the prescribing and dispensing of outpatient medications in order to ensure that prescriptions are appropriate, medically necessary, and not likely to result in adverse medical outcomes.

During a recent review of medication profiles, a high number of asthmatic beneficiaries receiving services from your practice site did not receive a vaccination for influenza before or during the flu season of 2013-2014. Please consider encouraging influenza vaccinations for asthmatics during influenza season.

The Centers for Disease Prevention and Control (CDC) Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) recommends that everyone over the age of 6 months who does not have contraindications should be vaccinated annually against seasonal influenza.<sup>1</sup> Current asthma guidelines from The National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute (NHLBI) are in agreement with the CDC recommendations.<sup>2</sup> The Global Initiative for Asthma (GINA) recommends advising patients with moderate-severe asthma to have an influenza vaccination every year, or at least when vaccination of the general population is advised.<sup>3</sup> Individuals with asthma are considered to be at risk for medical complications attributable to severe influenza.<sup>4</sup> Vaccination may reduce risk of death, hospitalization, and other serious outcomes such as pneumonia.

Thank you for your professional assistance in this matter.

For questions, comments, or site specific information please contact the Drug Utilization Review (DUR) Program at: [DUR@health.ny.gov](mailto:DUR@health.ny.gov) or (716) 829-5227.

Sincerely,

John F. Naioti, Jr., R.Ph. Manager, Drug  
Utilization Review Program

**References**

1. Grohskopf LA, Olsen, S. J., Sokolow, L. Z. et. al. Prevention and Control of Seasonal Influenza with Vaccines: Recommendations of the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) — United States, 2014–15 Influenza Season. *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report* 2014;63:11.
2. Expert Panel Report 3 (EPR-3): Guidelines for the Diagnosis and Management of Asthma-Summary Report 2007. *J Allergy Clin Immunol* 2007; 120: S94-138.
3. From the Global Strategy for Asthma Management and Prevention, Global Initiative for Asthma (GINA) 2014. Available from: <http://www.ginasthma.org/>.
4. Prevention and control of seasonal influenza with vaccines. Recommendations of the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices--United States, 20132014. *MMWR Recomm Rep* 2013;62:1-43.