



## Department of Health

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### **RETROSPECTIVE DUR INTERVENTION NOTICE: INFLUENZA VACCINATION AND CHRONIC OBSTRUCTIVE PULMONARY DISEASE**

August 19, 2016

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.

According to a recent review of medication profiles, a number of beneficiaries with chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) receiving services from your practice site did not have evidence of receiving a vaccination for influenza before or during the 2015-2016 flu season in their Medicaid claims history.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends that everyone without contraindications over the age of 6 months should be vaccinated annually against seasonal influenza.<sup>1</sup> Current COPD guidelines from the Global Initiative for Chronic Obstructive Lung Disease (GOLD) advise that influenza vaccination can reduce the number of COPD exacerbations and hospitalizations.<sup>2</sup> As such, the GOLD group recommends that the influenza vaccination should be offered to every COPD patient.<sup>2</sup>

Individuals with COPD are considered to be at risk for medical complications attributable to severe influenza.<sup>3</sup> Vaccination may reduce risk of death, hospitalization, and other serious outcomes such as pneumonia.<sup>3</sup> Please consider influenza vaccinations for individuals with COPD this influenza season. Thank you for your professional consideration in this matter.

In addition, the CDC's Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) has advised that the live attenuated influenza vaccine (LAIV), also known as the "nasal spray" flu vaccine, should **not** be used during the 2016-2017 flu season. This is based on data showing poor or relatively lower effectiveness of LAIV from 2013 through 2016.<sup>4</sup>

For general or specific questions or comments, please contact the Drug Utilization Review (DUR) Program project team at (716) 829-5227.

Sincerely,

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

#### References

1. Frequently Asked Flu Questions 2016-2017 Influenza Season; Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. <http://www.cdc.gov/flu/about/season/flu-season-2016-2017.htm> (Accessed August 15, 2016)
2. *Global Strategy for the Diagnosis, Management and Prevention of COPD*, Global Initiative for Chronic Obstructive Lung Disease (GOLD) 2016. Available from: <http://goldcopd.org/>.
3. Prevention and control of seasonal influenza with vaccines. Recommendations of the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices--United States, 2013-2014. *MMWR Recomm Rep* 2013;62:1-43.
4. "ACIP votes down use of LAIV for 2016-2017 flu season" Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. June 22, 2016 <http://www.cdc.gov/media/releases/2016/s0622-iaiv-flu.html> (Accessed Aug 15, 2016)