

Background

A survey conducted in mid-November of 2009 revealed that only 49% of health care workers (HCW) had received the seasonal influenza vaccination, failing to achieve the Healthy People 2010 target of 60%. Failure by HCW to receive influenza vaccination creates risk for not only the unimmunized individual, but also increases infection risk of other individuals with whom they come in contact, including patients. There is a critical need for innovative strategies to improve influenza vaccination acceptance among HCW with whom previous approaches have been unsuccessful.

Objectives

We proposed three major objectives for this study:

1. Characterize health care workers' knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors regarding influenza and influenza vaccination.
2. Create a replicable model that utilizes innovative communication and promotional strategies, integrated with traditionally successful approaches, to increase health care worker acceptance of influenza vaccination
3. Evaluate the impact of the intervention on health care workers' influenza vaccination rate.

Methods

This study will be conducted at West Virginia University Hospitals (WVUH) as a cooperative effort between West Virginia University School of Pharmacy, WVUH Employee Health, and WVUH Department of Pharmaceutical Services. The study will incorporate innovative pharmacist-led strategies to improve health care worker influenza vaccination that complement and enhance the existing WVUH annual influenza immunization campaign. The target population of this intervention includes all health care workers at WVUH. A key component of the proposed strategies is the utilization of social media and social networking sites to disseminate information about influenza, influenza immunization, and campaign updates. These social networking sites will be maintained jointly by pharmacists from the Hospital and the School of Pharmacy and will include a Facebook page, Twitter feed, and Ning page. In addition, the web campaign will have a central website that includes links to these social networking sites as well as links to websites for ASHP Stop the Flu – It Starts with You!, Centers for Disease Control Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices, Immunization Action Coalition, and the World Health Organization. An interactive educational tool housed on the website will be the “Ask the Pharmacist!” feature. Users can use this tool to ask questions about influenza, immunizations, and related topics and receive a response directly from a pharmacist. These campaign components are expected to increase the pharmacist’s visibility as a leader and advocate for influenza immunization among health care workers.

Results

Data will be collected from participant questionnaires and through review of existing databases. Outcomes measured will include knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors of participants, rates of vaccination from the 2009-2010 and 2010-2011 influenza seasons, and utilization of campaign web resources.