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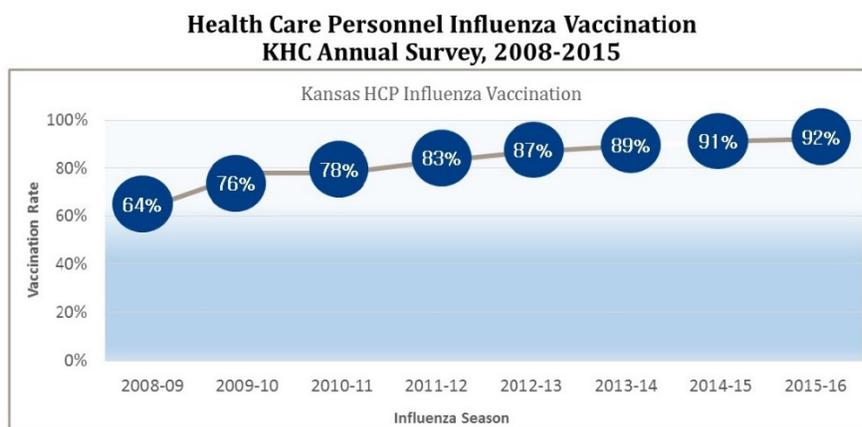
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Kansas hospital survey: Flu vaccine coverage among health care workers continues to rise

(Topeka, KS – October 11, 2016) More than 9 out of 10 Kansas health care workers are protecting themselves and their patients from the flu by receiving the influenza vaccination. According to the Kansas Healthcare Collaborative, its statewide survey of Kansas hospitals indicates 92.3 percent of health care workers were immunized during the 2015-16 flu season, compared to 91.0 percent in 2014-15.

The survey of 141 Kansas hospitals included all groups of health care workers, including hospital staff, physicians, students, volunteers and others, such as licensed independent practitioners and contractors who work within the hospital setting. All but four hospitals responded to the KHC's eighth annual survey for a 96.5 percent response rate.



The 1.3 percent statewide increase over the previous year's immunization rate reflects a positive trend. It also compares favorably with the national rate for acute care hospitals, which the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) estimates to be 91.2 percent for the 2015-16 flu season.

In contrast, the first statewide survey KHC conducted in 2009 found that only 64 percent of health care workers and medical staff were immunized against the flu. Since 2008, KHC has campaigned to increase the number of hospital health care workers receiving seasonal influenza vaccinations as part of its statewide efforts to decrease health care-associated infections. KHC is working with hospitals to achieve a 100 percent immunization rate by providing education, encouraging adoption of best practices and facilitating resource sharing.

"We are pleased to continue seeing progress in hospitals across the state, yet we still have work to do," said Kendra Tinsley, KHC executive director. "The flu can be serious, and by getting vaccinated, individuals working within the health care setting can help protect not only themselves, but their patients, as well as their families at home."

Several leading national health care and patient safety organizations have recommended that all hospital health care personnel, including medical staff, receive the seasonal influenza vaccine—a key measure in preventing the spread of influenza.

A vaccination policy for health care personnel remains the largest single factor for increasing vaccination rates among hospitals, according to the CDC. The KHC survey confirmed this finding with more than one-third of all hospitals having a policy, and more making plans to adopt one.

The most frequently used methods by Kansas hospitals for ensuring all personnel are immunized include providing education about the flu vaccine, sending reminders, and monitoring progress facility-wide.

National recommendations and resources for hospitals are available on the KHC website at www.khconline.org/initiatives/immunization-project.

KHC is a provider-led 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization with a mission to transform health care through patient-centered initiatives that improve quality, safety and value. Founded in 2008 by the Kansas Hospital Association and the Kansas Medical Society, KHC embodies the commitment of two of the state's leading health care provider groups to act as a resource and to continuously enhance the quality of care provided to Kansans. For more information about the Kansas Healthcare Collaborative visit www.khconline.org.