

Influenza vaccine delays are a problem for pediatricians

May 5 2018

Pediatricians report influenza vaccine delivery delays as a significant problem, particularly for the Vaccines For Children (VFC) program vaccines, leading to many missed opportunities for vaccination, according to a new survey being presented at the Pediatric Academic Societies (PAS) 2018 Meeting.

A nationally representative survey among pediatricians was conducted from June 2017 through September 2017 to assess the extent to which delays in receipt of [influenza](#) vaccine from private and VFC program stocks pose problems and provider contingency plans in the event of influenza vaccine delays.

For private stock influenza vaccine, considering the last three influenza vaccination seasons, three percent reported delays in receipt of influenza vaccine as a major problem, 18 percent a moderate problem, 32 percent a minor problem, and 48 percent as not a problem. In contrast, for VFC influenza vaccine, 15 percent reported delays as a major problem, 32 percent a moderate problem, 33 percent a minor problem, and 20 percent as not a problem.

When either VFC or private influenza vaccine is out of stock, 56 percent reported delaying vaccination for patients whose vaccine is out of stock, 19 percent referred these patients elsewhere, seven percent postponed vaccination for all patients, and 18 percent borrowed vaccine between stocks. Among the 50 respondents who reported borrowing between stocks, almost all (98 percent) borrowed for individual patient visits

while only 30 percent borrowed for influenza vaccination clinics.

Uptake of influenza vaccine among children is low compared to other childhood vaccines, and missed opportunities for vaccination play an important role in this low uptake. Problems with receiving influenza vaccine in a timely manner within pediatric practices are an important cause of missed opportunities, but little is known about pediatricians' experiences and practices related to influenza vaccine delivery delays. Providers use a variety of strategies for addressing these delays, but in most cases, children either must go elsewhere or return to the clinic to receive influenza [vaccine](#). To increase uptake of [influenza vaccine](#) among children, systematic changes are needed to address these delays.

Dr. Sean O'Leary, one of the authors of the study, will present findings from "Experiences and Practices Regarding Influenza Vaccine Delays among Pediatricians" during the PAS 2018 Meeting on Saturday, May 5 at 5 p.m. EDT.

Provided by Pediatric Academic Societies

Citation: Influenza vaccine delays are a problem for pediatricians (2018, May 5) retrieved 2 May 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2018-05-influenza-vaccine-problem-pediatricians.html>

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