

Majority of workers at America's nursing homes unvaccinated against flu, COVID

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Health care workers at America's nursing homes are woefully under-

vaccinated for both flu and COVID-19, threatening their own health and that of the frail elderly patients under their care, a new report finds.

Looking at 2023 data collected at nearly 14,000 nursing homes nationwide, researchers found that that fewer than one in every four (22.9%) health care workers had received up-to-date COVID vaccines, while less than half (47.1%) had gotten the latest flu shot.

The findings were published in the Nov. 10 issue of the CDC journal *Morbidity & Mortality Weekly Report*.

Given the dangers posed by the threat of infectious disease spreading through nursing homes, "there is a need to promote evidence-based strategies to improve [vaccination coverage](#) among [health care professionals](#)" working at these facilities, said researchers led by Dr. Jeneita Bell. She is with the National Center for Emerging and Zoonotic Infectious Diseases, part of the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

The new report looked at data on staff vaccination rates at U.S. acute care hospitals and nursing homes, gathered from the CDC's National Healthcare Safety Network.

Data was collected on over 2 million [health care workers](#) at nearly 14,000 nursing homes nationwide, as well as 8.9 million staffers at over 4,000 hospitals across America.

Health care workers at hospitals had better vaccination rates against the flu in 2023 compared to those working at nursing homes: 81% had gotten the latest shot, Bell's team found.

However, up-to-date COVID immunization was very low among [hospital staff](#), with just 17.2% having gotten the latest vaccines, the study found.

Nursing home staff vaccination rates were low, and varied widely depending on where in the country the facility was located. For example, almost 41% of workers in nursing homes on the West Coast were up-to-date on their COVID shots, compared to just 17.5% of those in the South.

Similar disparities were seen when it came to vaccination against the flu. In certain southern states—Alabama, Florida, Kentucky, Louisiana and Missouri—less than 10% of staff at acute care hospitals were up-to-date on their COVID shots in 2023, the report found.

All of these numbers reflect an ongoing trend: A general decline in vaccinations since the end of the pandemic, the researchers said.

The exact reasons weren't clear, but "factors associated with low vaccination coverage might have been exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic and compounded by emerging concerns such as [vaccine](#) fatigue," Bell's group said.

More information: Find out more about flu and COVID-19 vaccines at the [California Department of Public Health](#).

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