Vaccine advocates can and should work together for positive change in long-term care as supportive members of the immunization community. Long-term care residents often have complex medical conditions and are at especially high risk of complications due to influenza; however, they are also among the most difficult populations to vaccinate.

Staff members of long-term care facilities can help increase rates by serving as vaccine champions and by encouraging residents to receive their immunizations. Residents in long-term care facilities can be billed for vaccines, although systems such as the federally mandated Minimum Data Set (including the health care personnel safety component that looks at organizational barriers to increased vaccine use in long-term care facilities).

A commitment to full vaccination of staff and residents is logical and achievable, and leading by example is a key role for health professionals in long-term care facilities. Staff members are generally covered by health insurance provided by the facility, and vaccines can also receive vouchers to use at pharmacies or other vaccination locations outside the facility. Billing for vaccine products and services can be billed through the facility or by contract firms that specialize in on-site vaccine administration and management. Staff members can be reimbursed for time spent obtaining vaccines and related activities.

Among the policy and legal considerations in long-term care, obtaining consent for vaccines from residents or their legally authorized representatives can be especially challenging. On the other hand, particular attention is paid to immunizations in skilled nursing care centers through initiatives such as the federally mandated Minimum Data Set (including the health care personnel safety component that looks at organizational barriers to increased vaccine use in long-term care facilities).

Vaccine hesitancy among staff is another challenge. All the myths that people believe about influenza and other vaccines have to be addressed and overcome. On the positive side, particular attention is paid to immunizations in skilled nursing care centers through initiatives such as the federally mandated Minimum Data Set (including the health care personnel safety component that looks at organizational barriers to increased vaccine use in long-term care facilities).

One of the ISGN’s top priorities of the “Charting a Path to Increase Immunization Rates in the Post-Acute and Long-Term Care Settings” report is to identify barriers to the full vaccination of residents and staff in long-term care facilities. Barriers to increasing immunization rates include: long-term care facilities have traditionally relied on medically trained immunization champions, and residents generally have not been asked if they wish to receive influenza immunizations; and residents may be unresponsive to marketing efforts and may be uninterested in their immunization status.

A key role for health professionals in long-term care is to provide continuing education to staff members on the latest evidence, treatment options, and current recommendations. They can provide technical assistance, including assistance in developing and implementing an immunization program, and can help ensure that all residents and staff are up-to-date on the latest recommendations.

In order to achieve, but no less important. As Americans enjoy added years of healthy living, the average age of the person in assisted living communities has increased. Among the policy and legal considerations in long-term care, obtaining consent for vaccines from residents or their legally authorized representatives can be especially challenging. On the other hand, particular attention is paid to immunizations in skilled nursing care centers through initiatives such as the federally mandated Minimum Data Set (including the health care personnel safety component that looks at organizational barriers to increased vaccine use in long-term care facilities).

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