



## TO THE POINT

# THE POWER OF VACCINES

## US VACCINATION RATES NEED IMPROVEMENT

While vaccines are becoming increasingly accessible, vaccination rates are still well below government goals. The most recent data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) predicts 18 to 35 million people nationwide will face influenza-associated illness in the 2023-2024 season. Flu-related work absences could cost employers billions of dollars in lost productivity each season.

## TIME TO TAKE ACTION

The flu season is usually considered to run from August/September through March/April, with a peak around February.

Coverage mandates are required under the Affordable Care Act for many vaccines, including the flu, but the way coverage is handled is at the plan's discretion. A plan may cover under the medical benefit alone or under both the medical and pharmacy benefit. Many people receive their flu vaccine from their local pharmacist, while others may need to rely on their doctor's office for their shot. Some employers even arrange to bring someone in to administer the flu vaccine to their employees while at work.

*The 2021-2022 flu season was responsible for:*

- 9.4 million flu illnesses
- 4.3 million medical visits
- 100,000 hospitalizations
- 4,900 flu-related deaths<sup>1</sup>

*However, the flu vaccine prevented an additional:*

- 1.8 million flu illnesses
- 1 million medical visits
- 22,000 hospitalizations
- 1,000 flu-related deaths<sup>2</sup>

## COVER YOUR PARTICIPANTS UNDER YOUR PHARMACY BENEFITS PLAN

Some plans still do not cover immunizations under the pharmacy benefit, which is unfortunate as pharmacists are one of the most accessible and convenient health care professionals. Coverage under the pharmacy benefit can easily be added and tends to be more cost-effective than the medical benefit.

The flu causes millions of illnesses, hundreds of thousands of hospitalizations and thousands of deaths every season. By being proactive, you can help keep both your workforce and your bottom line healthy. Help your participants get vaccinated by ensuring they have easy and cost-effective access.

**Sources:**

1. <https://www.cdc.gov/flu/about/burden/2021-2022.html>
2. <https://www.nfid.org/infectious-disease/flu/>

