

Influenza Vaccination Coverage in Charlotte County, 2013-2014



Background

Influenza activity is widespread in most of the country and is likely to continue for several weeks. This season, many high risk groups have been identified including children (≤ 18 years), senior citizens (≥ 65 years) and women who are pregnant. In recent weeks, the Florida Department of Health (FDOH) has received reports of several influenza illnesses, including hospitalizations requiring intensive care unit care among pregnant women. None of these women had received the 2013-2014 influenza vaccine. There have also been three pediatric influenza-associated deaths reported to the FDOH in the 2013-2014 flu season. Because of the increase in influenza activity in Florida, The Florida Department of Health in Charlotte County wanted to assess the number of citizens in the county who have been vaccinated for influenza. In order to do this immunization data was collected from Florida SHOTS, US Department of Health and Human Services, and by calling pediatrician offices around the county to assess their influenza vaccination procedures and policies.

Influenza Vaccine Coverage Among Seniors

When considering the population of senior citizens in Charlotte County, it was found that an overwhelming 54.58% of the seniors Medicare in this community have been vaccinated for influenza this 2013-2014 season. Figure 1 shows the rates of influenza vaccination among seniors on Medicare Charlotte and the surrounding counties.

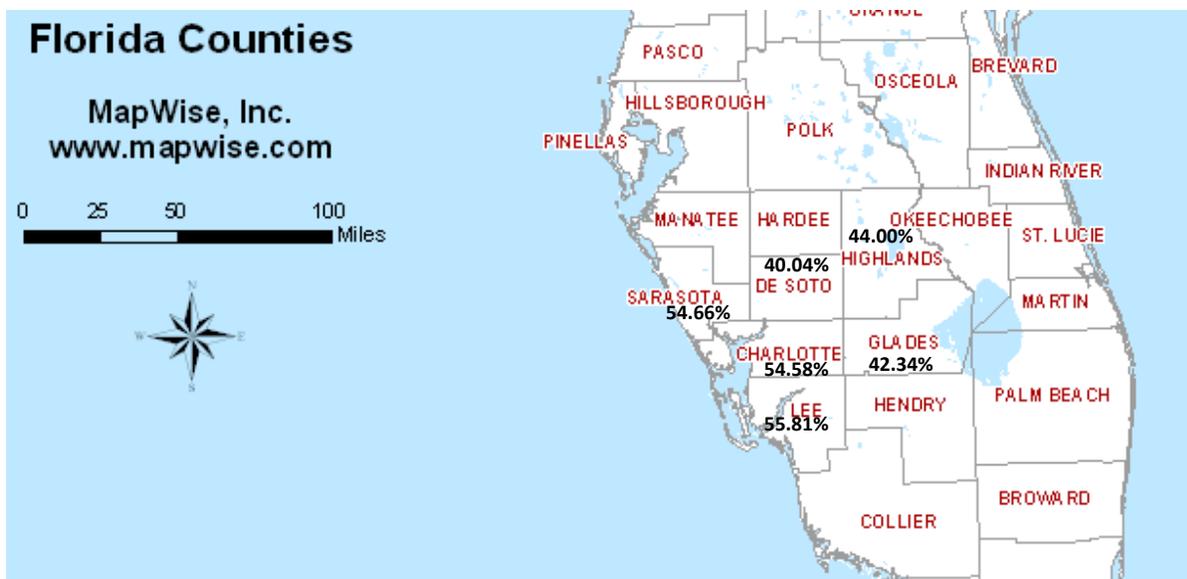


Figure 1: Rates of influenza vaccination among senior citizens on Medicare in Sarasota, De Soto, Highlands, Charlotte, Glades and Lee Counties for the 2013-2014 season. This data was provided by the US Department of Health and Human Services.

Influenza Vaccine Coverage Among Children:

The Charlotte County Health Department then assessed the vaccination rates for children in the county. To do this, data was collected and analyzed from Florida SHOTS. Florida SHOTS includes vaccination data from providers in the county who use the Vaccines for Children Program to provide their pediatric patients with influenza vaccine. Out of the ten pediatric offices in the county, seven input their data into Florida SHOTS. From this data, it was concluded that only 13% of the children in the community have been vaccinated for influenza this 2013-2014 season. Figure 2 provides the number and type of influenza vaccine given to the pediatric patients this season.

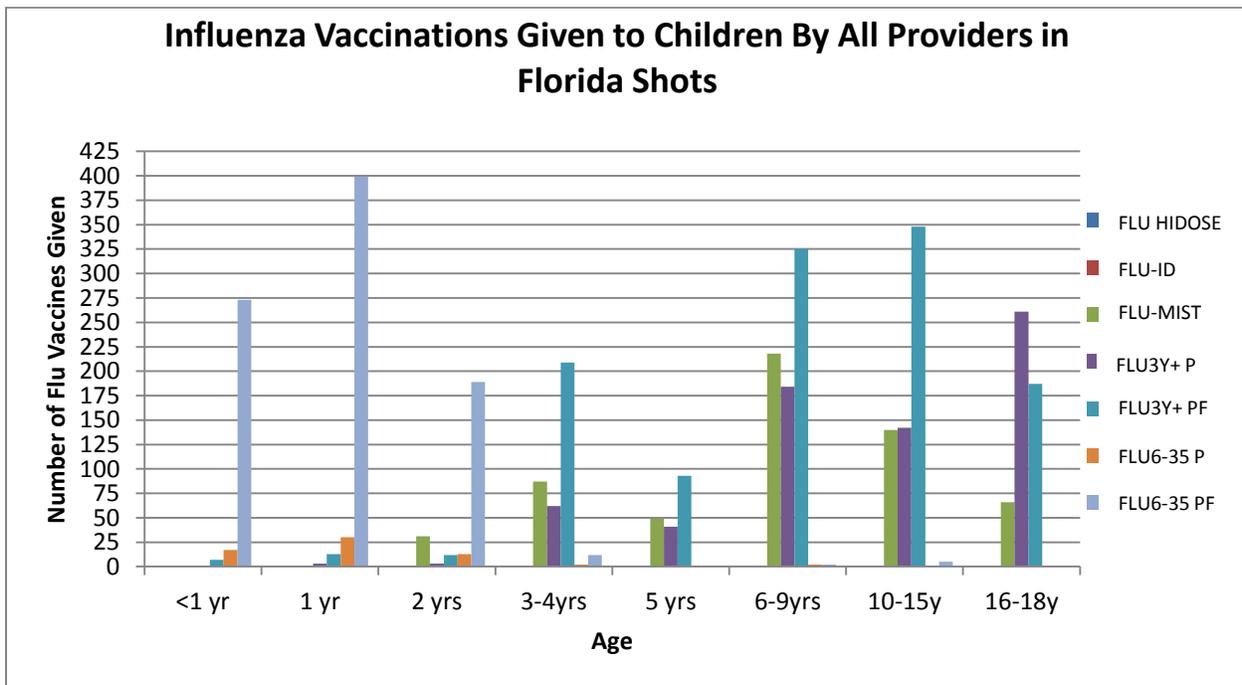


Figure 2: The number of influenza vaccines given by age to pediatric patients is shown above. Children below 3 years old were given FLU6-35 PF most often while children 3-15 years old were given FLU3Y+ PF most often. A total of 3,211 children in Charlotte County out of 24,834 have been vaccinated as of 02/03/2014 for the 2013-2014 season.

After coming to the conclusion that only 13% of the children in Charlotte County have been vaccinated for influenza the health department called the pediatrician offices asking about their influenza vaccination policies and procedures. All of these offices do provide the influenza vaccine to their patients, yet most of the offices are out of the vaccine or running very low on their supply. The health department also found a gap in children who may not be able, because of insurance reasons, to receive the influenza vaccine from their providers. These children are the ones on Medicaid and in Charlotte County that counts for 41% of our population of people ≤ 18 years old.

Conclusion:

The Charlotte County Department of Health has provided all Obstetrician (OB) offices in the county with updated information about the importance of the influenza vaccine for women who are pregnant. They were given flyers to hand out to patients as well as to post in the office about when influenza vaccinations should be given. The health department was also informed that although the OB offices do promote the influenza vaccine they do not provide the vaccine. Because of this, the health department will be giving free influenza vaccines this season to all pregnant women who come and want the vaccination. The Department of Health in Charlotte County will also be providing children in Charlotte County the influenza vaccine for free as long as supplies last. For future recommendations, the hope is to secure a relationship with the school system in order to make sure all students and parents know the importance of receiving the influenza vaccine each year. If funds allow and immunization rates are still low the Department of Health in Charlotte County, in the future, may work on setting up program to make sure the children are vaccinated whether it be through the school system or out in the community.

Resources:

http://ahca.myflorida.com/Medicaid/about/pdf/age_cnty_131130.pdf

<http://www.hhs.gov/nvpo/flu-vaccination-map>

<http://www.bing.com/images/search?q=map+of+florida+counties&qs=n&form=QBIR&pq=map+of+florida+counties&sc=8-18&sp=-1&sk=#view=detail&id=8B9B0EC5C1463B0A684700299100D03348380D7E&selectedIndex=16>

<http://www.cdc.gov/flu/>