



A publication from C.S. Mott Children's Hospital, the University of Michigan Department of Pediatrics and Communicable Diseases, and the University of Michigan Child Health Evaluation and Research (CHEAR) Unit

Public to Health Care Workers: Get Your H1N1 Vaccine

Health care workers are one of the priority groups for 2009 H1N1 flu vaccine, as soon as it becomes available this month. But health care workers have not been vaccinated in high numbers against seasonal flu in the past, leading some hospitals and health departments to consider requiring flu vaccination for their workers this season. The C.S. Mott Children's Hospital National Poll on Children's Health surveyed a national sample of adults (including health care workers) in August 2009, in order to gauge public support for mandatory vaccination of health care workers against H1N1 flu.

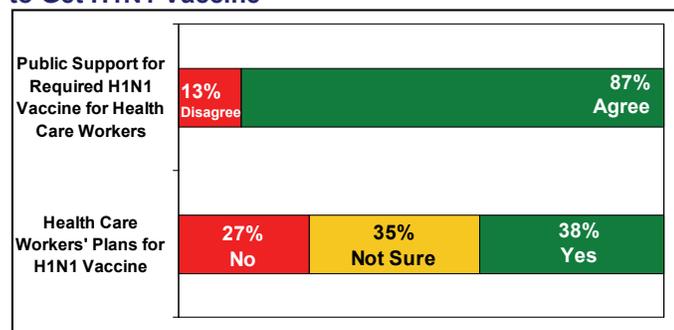
Strong Support for Required H1N1 Vaccination of Health Care Workers

The poll found that adults overwhelmingly support mandatory H1N1 vaccination for health care workers in the event of an H1N1 outbreak. 87% of adults either strongly agree or agree with requiring H1N1 vaccination for health care workers to try to stop the spread of H1N1 flu (Figure 1). Among health care workers themselves, there is also strong support (82%) for this requirement.

Health Care Workers' Plans to Get the H1N1 Vaccine

Although the CDC's national recommendations emphasize the importance of the H1N1 flu vaccine for health care workers, only 38% of health care workers plan to get vaccinated themselves (Figure 1). Health care workers were more likely than other adults in the Poll to say that they would not get vaccinated against H1N1 flu because there are medications to treat H1N1 illness, and because they were going to get the seasonal flu vaccine and would therefore not need protection against H1N1 flu (a misconception).

Figure 1. Public Support for Requiring Health Care Workers to Get H1N1 Vaccine and Health Care Workers' Plans to Get H1N1 Vaccine



Source: C.S. Mott Children's Hospital National Poll on Children's Health, 2009

Report Highlights

- **87% of adults support mandatory H1N1 vaccination for health care workers in the event of an H1N1 outbreak.**
- **Only 38% of health care workers plan to get the H1N1 vaccine.**

Implications

Federal and state health officials recommend vaccination against H1N1 flu for health care workers in 2009. The idea is that the workers will benefit, and patients will too—not only because of decreased spread of H1N1 flu to patients, but because health care facilities will have fewer employees out sick. Health care workers do not have a strong track record of vaccination against flu in past years, so hospital directors and some state public health officials (for example: New York State) have decided to mandate H1N1 flu vaccination for health care workers. There has been vocal opposition from some health care worker groups to this idea.

In this poll, it's clear for the first time where the public stands on this issue. There is overwhelming public support for vaccination of health care workers against H1N1 flu. Such strong support indicates that the public expects health care workers to lead by example. At a time of uncertainty about how severe H1N1 will be and how many lives it will affect, the public wants to rely on health care workers to be prepared—not only with hand-washing and masks, but with the vaccine that will soon be available.

Data Source

This report presents findings from a nationally representative household survey conducted exclusively by Knowledge Networks, Inc, for C.S. Mott Children's Hospital via a method used in many published studies. The survey was administered in August 2009 to a randomly selected, stratified group of adults aged 18 and older (n=2,365) from the Knowledge Networks standing panel that closely resembles the U.S. population (health care workers n=246). The sample was subsequently weighted to reflect population figures from the Census Bureau. The survey completion rate was 68% among panel members contacted to participate. The margin of error is plus or minus 1 to 3 percentage points. For results based on health care workers, the margin of error is higher.

C.S. Mott Children's Hospital National Poll on Children's Health

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