

Moving the Needle with Pediatric Influenza Vaccination

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Abstract Background Information: Seasonal influenza results in significant pediatric illness, hospitalization, and mortality. The Centers for Disease Control (CDC) and the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) consequently recommend facilitating influenza vaccination at every healthcare encounter including the perioperative period. The perioperative area identified a gap in care and missed opportunity to provide seasonal influenza vaccination during perioperative care for our pediatric patient population while under anesthesia. Prior to the 2023-2024 influenza season this community hospital lacked a process for providing recommended protective influenza vaccine to our vulnerable surgical and procedural pediatric patients.

Objectives of Project: The purpose of this initiative is to determine if Perioperative Services can increase seasonal influenza vaccination volume in our pediatric population by offering vaccination while under sedation or anesthesia during the surgical/procedural encounter. Target population includes children 6-months to 18-years of age undergoing procedure or surgery at the surgical venues, Main Operating Room (MOR), Main Procedure Room, Ambulatory Surgery Unit (ASU), and Eye Surgery Center (ESC).

Process of Implementation: After approval from the Research Determination Office, dedicated members of a multidisciplinary perioperative team, including anesthesia providers, leaders, nurses, physicians, and pharmacists, developed the Perioperative Pediatric Influenza Vaccination Program to address the urgency of action aimed at increasing pediatric influenza vaccination rates during the 2023-2024 season. Methods of implementation include offering vaccination services to parent/guardian(s), providing screening questionnaire to ensure patient eligibility, and providing vaccine education information from the CDC during the pre-operative setting. The intra-operative nurse retrieves the vaccine, ensures patient identity, and hands-off to the anesthesia provider who administers the vaccine while patient is under anesthetic therefore eliminating pain and anxiety associated with needle puncture. The PACU nurse assesses and monitors for vaccine related reaction.

Statement of Successful Practice: Collectively, the surgical venues successfully provided 202 pediatric patients with protective influenza vaccination from September 2023 to March 2024. Post-implementation the program has demonstrated 22% pediatric seasonal influenza vaccination capture during the inaugural season.

Implications for Advancing the Practice of Perianesthesia Nursing: The perioperative period is a prime opportunity to increase pediatric influenza vaccinations that will provide protection to vulnerable patients and the community, while creating a positive experience. The program can be replicated throughout the region and beyond. Every child vaccinated could be lifesaving.