

THE TRUSTEE

October 2020
QUARANTINE?

As we approach colder weather, time spent indoors will increase and the science experts forecast an increase in the spread of the Coronavirus. Recently, worldwide, the spread has been greatest in rural areas, including the Midwest region of the U.S. schools are attempting to reopen, but the possibility of increased positive tests exists and, thus, a restriction in actual classroom attendance. As children can spread the disease, children need to follow the same precautions as adults. It is easier said than done. It's a monumental task and parents and teachers will need to be prepared to switch to virtual learning at a moment's notice as affected people will need to self-quarantine. And, the situation could be further impacted by the flu season.

Efforts to reduce the spread of COVID-19, such as stay-at-home and shelter-in-place orders, have led to decreased use of routine preventive medical services. Ensuring that people continue or start getting routine vaccinations during the COVID-19 pandemic is essential for protecting people and communities from vaccine-preventable diseases and outbreaks, including the flu. Routine vaccination prevents illnesses that lead to unnecessary medical visits and hospitalizations, which further strain the healthcare system. For the upcoming flu season, flu vaccination will be very important to reduce flu because it can help reduce the overall impact of respiratory illnesses on the population and thus lessen the resulting burden on the healthcare system during the COVID-19 pandemic. The flu season will run November through to the Spring. A flu shot can prevent the flu or make the flu sickness milder and/or go away faster. Everyone 6 months and older should get a flu shot every year.

FDA's Vaccines and Related Biological Products Advisory Committee (VRBPAC) met in Silver Spring, Maryland during March to select the influenza viruses for the composition of the influenza vaccine for the 2020-2021 U.S. influenza season. Influenza virus strains were selected based on the influenza vaccine production method; egg-based and cell- or recombinant based.

The committee recommended that the quadrivalent formulation of egg-based influenza vaccines for the U.S. 2020-2021 influenza season, trivalent flu vaccines, to protect against three flu strains.

- influenza A (H1N1)—(A/Guangdong-Maonan)
- influenza A (H3N2)—(A/Hong Kong)
- an influenza B virus—(B/Washington, B/Victoria lineage)

These shots are called Fluvad (trivalent) and Fluvad Quadrivalent, an option for flu vaccines that are approved for people ages 65 and older. Quadrivalent includes an ingredient called adjuvant, which creates a stronger immune system response. Although the committee attempts to choose the best strains for each year, the effectiveness of the vaccine won't be known until the flu season ends. And while the Southern hemisphere, which experiences the flu earlier than the Northern hemisphere, has been experiencing a relatively mild season, thanks partially to COVID-19 mitigation measures such

as social distancing and mask wearing, it's no guarantee of a milder experience in the Northern hemisphere.

NOCC

The Notice of Creditable Coverage (NOCC) is available on the Trust website (www.kfftrustfund.com). It's a document stating your prescription drug plan is of equal or greater benefit than the Medicare Part D plan and, therefore, you are not required to enroll in the federal plan.

EOB's On-Line

Most Trust members have opted to receive their Explanation of Benefits (EOB) on line. Directions for enrolling for on-line EOB's can be found on the Trust website.

PART B MEDICARE REIMBURSEMENT

The Kingston Schools, to date, have yet to fully reimburse all eligible members for the \$25/mo. shortfall in payments for 2018 or for the semi-annual underpayment of \$9.60/mo. for 2020. It has been explained, accepted, and promised, but never delivered.

IN MEMORIAM: Rada Hartrum | Gil Hales | Cecelia Keehn