

Step 4: Training your Spokespeople

Step 5: Pitching the Media

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Developing Key Messages

Before reaching out to the media, it is important to articulate who your audiences are and what you want them to know or do. In every awareness campaign key messages are developed in the initial stages to ensure consistency and accuracy in communications throughout campaign activities.

Each year, the CDC develops key messages for its annual Influenza Vaccination Awareness Campaign. To ensure consistency across the United States, we encourage CDC partners to use the CDC's key messages to inform their materials (i.e., press releases, public service announcements, speeches, articles, locally produced PSAs, interviews with reporters, etc.).

Below is a sample of key messages from the CDC. A full list of key messages by target audience and/or topic can be found in Appendix A.

Sample CDC Key Messages

Key messages for the General Public

- Each year in the U.S., an average of 36,000 people die, and more than 200,000 are hospitalized from serious flu-related complications.
- Some people, such as older people, young children, pregnant women, and people with certain health conditions, are at higher risk for serious flu complications.
- The time to get a flu vaccine starts in September and continues into winter through January or later.
- Vaccination is the single best way to protect yourself and the people you love from influenza.

Key messages for Healthcare Providers

- All healthcare professionals, as well as those in training for healthcare professions, should be vaccinated annually against influenza.
- The annual supply of influenza vaccine and the timing of its distribution cannot be guaranteed in any year. It is expected that vaccine will become available beginning in September and continue to arrive on a rolling basis through December 2008. A record amount of vaccine is expected to be distributed during the 2008-2009 season.
- Providers should plan accordingly and have plans to continue vaccinating throughout the season as vaccine is distributed. Providers should routinely offer influenza vaccine throughout the influenza season, even after influenza activity has been documented in the community.
- To avoid missed opportunities for vaccination, providers should offer vaccination during routine healthcare visits or during hospitalizations whenever vaccine is available.

For more information on the CDC's key messages, please see Appendix A.