

Health Insurance Providers Take on the Seasonal Flu

As fall rolls in, Americans across the country are bracing for the start of the seasonal flu season. Nearly all Americans with comprehensive health insurance coverage can receive an annual flu shot with no out-of-pocket cost, and health insurance providers are taking steps to increase the vaccination rates for children and adults.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends that individuals get vaccinated early in the fall, before flu season begins, preferably no later than the end of October.

For many years, health insurance providers have actively encouraged Americans to get their vaccines to protect them from dangerous illnesses, including the flu. Examples of health insurance providers promoting the flu vaccine include:

- [Blue Shield of California's Promise Health Plan's](#) network of Community Resource Centers, along with L.A. Care Health Plan, is offering drive-thru flu shot clinics across Los Angeles county, at no cost to members. The clinics will be held through November 14, and everyone older than 3 will receive a \$10 Ralph's/Food 4 Less gift card.
- [The BlueCross BlueShield of Tennessee Foundation](#) has launched a statewide campaign encouraging Tennesseans to get the flu vaccine. BlueCross medical experts say the flu shot is especially important considering flu season will overlap with the COVID-19 crisis. More flu vaccine information and resources are available at [BetterTennessee.com/flu](#).
- [CalOptima](#) has launched the "Don't Wait-Vaccinate" campaign, which is designed to ensure that members take advantage of no-cost services to stay current with their vaccinations. The campaign includes a drive-through immunization clinic for at-risk seniors, as well as a postcard mailing to remind members to get their flu shot.
- [Cigna](#) is planning a comprehensive flu vaccine campaign that will use direct mail, email and social media to encourage flu shots followed by a second reminder in December. In addition, Cigna will be utilizing customer touchpoints to reinforce messaging. There will be an additional focus on high risk and underserved populations.
- [ConnectiCare](#) has put together a web page full of flu vaccination educational material, including an article promoting the importance of the flu shot during the COVID-19 crisis and one on differentiating the symptoms between COVID-19 and the flu.
- [CVS Health](#) is reminding the public that it is more important than ever to get vaccinated. Flu shots are available at roughly 10,000 CVS Pharmacy and approximately 1,100 MinuteClinic locations across the country, and CVS Health is taking additional steps to promote safety. For example, all patients must wear a face mask and have their temperature taken before getting the flu shot, and CVS staff will be wearing PPE and observing enhanced cleaning protocols.
- [Highmark Health](#) and the Allegheny Health Network have launched a multimedia campaign to highlight the importance of the flu vaccine. The month long 'little shot, big impact' campaign reach out to members through print, digital, and broadcast media, emphasizing the importance of a flu shot and how safe, easy, and effective it is.
- [Independence Blue Cross](#) is taking extra steps this year to advise those in the communities it serves to take proper precautions to prevent getting the flu and to stem the spread of the virus. Independence's specific efforts include creating a website filled with comprehensive information about the flu, including the importance of getting a shot; flu symptoms; treatment options and more. Independence is also promoting flu shots to members and the public through other digital means, including posts on all of the company's social media channels; videos and blogs by Independence medical directors; and member/group e-mails and text messages.

- [‘Ohana Health Plan](#) is launching its annual Fluvention program to encourage members to get their flu shot. ‘Ohana Health Plan will regularly communicate with members – via texts, phone calls, emails and social media – to encourage members to get their flu vaccines. Additionally, ‘Ohana Health Plan providers will receive messaging toolkits to help them strengthen how they communicate with their patients about getting their annual flu vaccination.
- [Sutter Health Plus](#) is promoting the importance of the flu vaccine during the COVID-19 crisis. The flu shot is covered for members at no cost-share when administered by a participating provider. Members can visit a network pharmacy, schedule an appointment with a participating provider or a Sutter flu shot clinic, or visit Sutter Walk-In care. Sutter Health Plus will promote the flu vaccine through social media posts, a member newsletter, and via articles posted on the main public website.
- [UCare](#) is urging Minnesotans to get the flu shot to avoid a “twindemic” during the COVID-19 crisis. UCare is teaming up with non-profit Health Fair 11 to offer 3 days of drive-through flu shots at the Minnesota State Fairgrounds.

Vaccines save lives. This year, as more people work from home and go to the pharmacy or doctor’s office less frequently, health insurance providers are stepping up their outreach to encourage everyone to get their flu vaccines. Together, we can keep Americans in all our communities healthy.