

News Release

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With Standing Orders for Vaccinations Now Allowed in New Mexico, Pneumococcal and Influenza Vaccination Rates Should Improve

Albuquerque, NM – Based on the most recent release of quality data on [Hospital Compare](#) (third quarter of 2006 through second quarter of 2007), New Mexico lags the nation in both influenza and pneumococcal vaccinations given to hospitalized patients. New Mexico stands at 65 percent for influenza vaccinations and 66 percent for pneumococcal vaccinations, compared to 75 percent nationally for both vaccinations. A recent change in New Mexico statute, however, could pave the way for hospitals to adopt more efficient processes for vaccinating at-risk patients so that these rates can be improved.

Due in part to efforts last year by the New Mexico Medical Review Association (NMMRA) and the New Mexico Influenza Vaccine Consortium (NMIVC), the New Mexico Board of Medicine modified language requiring a physician's order for vaccines under the "Unprofessional Conduct/Dishonorable Conduct Statute" (NMAC statute 16.10.8.8). As a result, the Boards of Medicine and Pharmacy made important modifications to Medical Practice Act, Section 61-6-15,D,(29), regulations to allow a standing orders program for vaccinations in New Mexico hospitals.

The Board of Pharmacy also aligned its rule in NMAC 16.19.4.9 to exempt from penalty the prescribing or dispensing and administering for immunizations programs. The decision of the Board of Pharmacy allows dispensing of vaccines under standing orders approved /authorized by the institution's pharmacy and therapeutics committee and/or medical director.

"These changes align state regulations with federal guidelines that, since 2001, have exempted the requirement of a physician's order for inpatient and nursing home vaccinations for pneumonia and influenza," explained Carlene Brown, MPH, CPHQ, NMMRA quality improvement manager.

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About NMMRA

NMMRA is an Albuquerque-based, non-profit, physician-sponsored organization. Serving as a resource to the state's health care community and to Medicare beneficiaries, NMMRA seeks to fulfill its mission to facilitate demonstrable and continuous improvement in the quality of health care and achieve its vision to be a premier and innovative leader in improving health care. NMMRA has served continuously as the state's only federally contracted Medicare QIO since 1984. NMMRA also serves as the state's Medicaid External Quality Review Organization.

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