

18 January 2017

Dear Colleagues

Influenza Immunisation of Pregnant Women

I am aware that many of you have been working hard to ensure that pregnant women can access influenza vaccine when they attend for antenatal care at their maternity provider. The PH Commissioning Central team recently sent you all a short survey and from that it is estimated that almost 60% of Maternity units are now offering influenza vaccination to women in their care.

Uptake among pregnant women, although higher this season than last season, remains below 50% nationally. We need to do all we can to improve access to and uptake of this important protection for women.

A pregnant woman has a relative risk of influenza related death that is seven times higher than a non-pregnant woman of the same age and general health; their unborn child is also at risk from the effects of influenza with a higher risk of prematurity, still birth and low birth weight babies born to women who have influenza during their pregnancy.

I urge those of you who have so far been able to secure local contracts with your maternity providers to continue your efforts with a view to there being more maternity units engaged in this important service delivery for the 2017/18 season.

Everyone agrees that offering immunisation at the health venue women most attend when pregnant, and it being offered by their main care provider the midwife, is the ideal route to improve access to, and uptake of, this vital protection for pregnant women.

On Tuesday 21 March 2017 NHS England Public Health Commissioning Central team will host a workshop in London to discuss the influenza immunisation programme and future delivery. Maternity service commissioning will be a major item for discussion at this workshop.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank you for your continued work to improve quality of delivery and access to immunisation for all the eligible groups.

Yours sincerely



Alex Morton

Director of Commissioning System Change & Public Health Commissioning