

Flu Clinic Best Practices

This year has challenged us to innovate alternative ways of providing our patients with high quality care. This fall season is no different as we prepare diligently to prevent a twin-demic of Flu and COVID. We recognize that there is a limited amount of time to vaccinate patients for the Flu so we wanted to share some best practices that your colleagues across our network have found successful.

In addition to offering the flu vaccine to those that are scheduled in the office, some practices have found running a designated Flu clinic to be valuable. This designated space has allowed practices to see more patients in a shortened amount of time, proactively vaccinate their patients, and provide access to those patients who aren't otherwise scheduled for a visit. Typically, the clinic is run for a designated number of hours by a select number of staff. Since COVID, these clinics have also been held as a drive up in the practice's parking lot. Best practices from both, in office and drive up, are listed below.

General Considerations:

- Standing order for flu vaccination
- Keep in mind the scope of practice for each individual. If an LPN is administering the vaccines, they will need RN or MD oversight and sign off.
- Remember to provide patients with the VAERS form following vaccination
- Follow normal COVID-19 recommendations for social distancing and cleaning of the space
- Documentation should include pre-vaccination screening and COVID-19 screening as well as your chart note

In Office Clinic:

How long should I plan for each patient?
You should be able to schedule a patient every 10 minutes. This will allow time for check in and for delivery of the vaccine. Please note that you may need additional time to allow for appropriate social distancing and cleaning of the space.
Documentation
You should be able to document directly into your EMR as normal. Documentation should include pre-vaccination screening and COVID-19 screening as well as your chart note.
Cleaning
Follow your normal COVID-19 cleaning protocols for the room. This may impact your scheduling and the number of patients you can see for a flu clinic in a day, as you'll need time to turn the room over. One recommendation, if you have the rooms available, is to rotate between two rooms. You can room a patient in Room A, vaccinate them, and then clean Room A while the next patient is being shown to Room B.
Safety
Establish and review a safety plan for anaphylaxis. Epinephrine should be on hand during the flu clinics.

Drive up Clinic:

How long should I plan for each patient?
You should be able to schedule one patient every 5 minutes, and have them drive through. From what we've heard from practices that have run a drive up clinic, you can actually manage 1 car every 5 minutes, even if there are two patients that need a vaccine.
Documentation
Make sure you have wifi access where you're planning on administering the vaccine, so you can connect to your EMR. If that's not an option, documenting on paper and entering into the patient's chart at a later time can also work. Documentation should include pre-vaccination screening and COVID-19 screening as well as your chart note.
Vaccine Storage
You can store the vaccine in a cooler, be mindful of the number of doses you store in the cooler at once.
Safety
Consider establishing post vaccination parking/monitoring areas, the ACIP recommends that providers consider observing patient for 10-15 minutes after vaccination to decrease the risk of injury should they faint. Establish and review a safety plan for anaphylaxis. Epinephrine should be on hand during the outdoor flu clinics.
Additional considerations
In order to not bog down the office staff with additional calls/visitors, plan on creating signs for your parking lot directing patients where to go. If you provide a confirmation call or portal message, reiterate that they can just drive up at the appointed time, and don't need to park or go in to the office first. Remember to provide patients with the VAERS form following vaccination, this likely involves printing a supply for the clinic.

References:

<https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/pandemic-guidance/index.html>