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Issue 28, December 2014

# TM COMMUNICATOR

## WORDS FROM TAMMY

Hope and happiness and time spent with family and friends are a wonderful part of the holidays. But for some, especially the elderly and shut-ins, or those without family nearby, it can be a time of extreme loneliness. For many, children have left the home or a significant other has passed away. Depression, loneliness, and even anger can set in. However, experts say there are several things that can be done to help alleviate loneliness. As you are working with Idaho Home Choice participants or experiencing this with a loved one, please keep these tips in mind:

- ◆ Spend time with them. Look at holiday photos or videos with them, and leave them photos to view when they're alone. Let them reminisce.
- ◆ Listen and understand when they want to talk, even if the talk is negative.
- ◆ Holiday cards can decrease in quantity for the elderly. Help them write their own cards to keep a connection with life-long friends.
- ◆ If a parent is in an assisted living facility or nursing home, check with the local kindergarten or day care centers to see if they can bring children to visit.
- ◆ Decorate their home or room in stages, presenting cherished ornaments at intervals so there is something to look forward to.
- ◆ Bring traditional baked goods or treats regularly for them and their friends to share.
- ◆ Call their friends and see if they can come to a small gathering or party.
- ◆ Make their dinner table special. Whether at home or in a facility, try to make the table festive with some appropriate colors and themes.
- ◆ Remind them how important they are. They may feel useless and burdensome. Make them feel loved.

Wishing everyone the happiest of holidays and thanks for all you do for the Idaho Home Choice Program!!

Tammy Ray - IHC Project Manager

## WHAT SARAH HAS TO SAY

Just a quick list for you this month:

- ◆ Please remember to stay in contact with your regional Medicaid staff. It is very important that they know what is going on with your participant.
- ◆ Please remember to give us a heads up about the date of discharge. This date is extremely important!
- ◆ Don't forget that there is a new online training for anyone that is interested in learning more about transition management and Idaho Home Choice. If you have suggestions for other trainings you would like to see let me know.
- ◆ Please have a very, very happy holiday season!!!

Sarah Spaulding - IHC Project Coordinator

## TRAINING TIPS - Flu Season and Seniors

It has been recognized for many years that people 65 years and older are at greater risk of serious complications from the flu compared with young, healthy adults. During most seasons, it's estimated that 90 percent of seasonal flu-related deaths and between 50 and 60 percent of seasonal flu-related hospitalizations in the United States occur in people 65 years and older (Kostova/Reed models). This is because human immune defenses become weaker with age. So influenza can be a very serious disease for people 65 and older.

### Actions To Take This Flu Season:

- ◆ **Get Your Flu Shot** - The best way to prevent the flu is with a flu vaccine. CDC recommends that everyone 6 months of age and older get a seasonal flu vaccine soon after it becomes available in your community, ideally by October. Vaccination is especially important for people 65 years and older because they are at high risk for complications from flu.

A flu vaccine protects against the flu viruses that research indicates will be most common during the upcoming season. (See Vaccine Virus Selection for this season's exact vaccine composition.) The vaccine has been updated for this season and immunity wanes over a year, so you should get vaccinated this year even if you were vaccinated last season. Immunity sets in about two weeks after vaccination.

People 65 years and older have two flu shots available to choose from - a regular dose flu vaccine and a newer flu vaccine designed for people 65 and older with a higher dose. The high dose vaccine is associated with a stronger immune response to vaccination (higher antibody production). Whether or not the improved immune response translated into greater protection against flu disease has been the topic of ongoing research. A recent study published in The New England Journal of Medicine indicated that the high-dose vaccine was 24.2% more effective in preventing flu in adults 65 years of age and older relative to a standard-dose vaccine. (The confidence interval for this result was 9.7% to 36.5%). The CDC and its Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices have not expressed a preference for either vaccine. These new findings will be considered along with other available data in ACIP's future policy deliberations.

- ◆ **Practice good health habits** - including covering coughs, washing hands often, and avoiding people who are sick.
- ◆ **Seek medical advice quickly if you develop flu symptoms** - to see whether you might need medical evaluation or treatment with antiviral drugs. It's very important that antiviral drugs be used early to treat flu in people who are very sick with flu (for example, people who are in the hospital), and people who are sick with flu and have a greater chance of getting serious flu complications, like people 65 and older (see box for full list of high risk persons/conditions).

Flu symptoms include fever, cough, sore throat, runny or stuffy nose, body aches, headache, chills and fatigue. Some people may also have vomiting and diarrhea. People may be infected with the flu and have respiratory symptoms without a fever.

Article found at: <http://www.cdc.gov/flu/about/disease/65over.htm>



### Question of the Month:

*What is the policy on purchasing clothes ?*

We understand that often times the participants that we work with do not have any clothes when they transition out of the facility. If this happens please contact one of us for approval of the purchase of clothing.

### SHOUT OUTS!

**Tina Dressel** for going above and beyond the call of duty! We can't begin to tell you how much we appreciate you stepping in at a time of crucial need. Thank you, thank you, thank you!!

As of 12/17/2014

We have transitioned...

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