

# The "Don't Catch The Flu Bear Blues" Educational Campaign to Increase Hand Hygiene Awareness During The Flu Vaccine Shortage in an Orthopedic Specialty Hospital

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**Issue:** On October 5, 2004 there was news from the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) that due to problems in manufacturing of the influenza vaccine for the 2004-2005 season, the expected supply was reduced. Because of the situation, persons who were not included in one of the priority groups were asked to forego or defer vaccination. In an effort to prevent the transmission and acquisition of the influenza virus, an educational campaign was designed to increase awareness to the importance of hand hygiene and respiratory etiquette.

**Project:** The theme of the educational program was "Don't Catch the Flu Bear Blues" and involved the distribution of wicker baskets filled with a teddy bear with a pediatric mask on the face, bottles of alcohol based hand rub, respiratory etiquette flyers, an educational poster, and candy kisses. The baskets were distributed to each of the Infection Control Liaisons from the following departments: inpatient nursing units, radiology, acute care unit, ICU, patient access, laboratory, rehab unit, prescreening unit, operating room, post anesthesia care unit, and induction room area. Baskets were re-filled with alcohol hand rub and candy over a four-week period. The project cost was approximately \$700.00 which included the baskets, bears, candy and hand rub. Four cases of hand rub were donated from the Pharmacy Department to contribute to reducing influenza transmission from the reduction in vaccine supplies.



**Results:** 15 baskets were distributed the week before the holidays in the spirit of a gift basket to the liaisons. They were instructed to keep the basket and teddy bear after the campaign was completed. Staff was delighted to receive the individual bottles of hand rub as well as the patients who received bottles in Patient Access (admitting). Only 9 of approximately 1000 HCWs were documented to have influenza during the flu season by Employee Health despite the low number of employees vaccinated ~ 260.

## Donations:

400 bottles Cal Stat were donated by Steris Co and the NEBH Pharmacy Department\* Pediatric Masks were donated by Kimberly Clark

\*Each basket was filled with approx. 60 bottles of Cal Stat – with a distribution of > 900 bottles of hand rub to staff

## Purchases:

Baskets	\$5.00 x 15	\$ 75.00
Teddy Bears	\$5.00 x 15	\$ 75.00
Cal Stat 400 bottles	x .89	\$356.00
Hersey Kisses		\$150.00
Total:		\$656.00



**Lessons learned:** Unique, creative hand hygiene campaigns heighten awareness to the importance of hand washing and the use of alcohol based hand rubs in patient care areas. It was a great way to market the infection control program and boost staff morale during an unusual flu vaccine season.

