Dear Colleagues

Annual influenza vaccination

As winter approaches it is a good time to remind you how important it is that we all do the right thing and get our annual flu vaccination to protect against catching and spreading influenza.

Frontline healthcare workers are at a higher risk of flu than the general public because of their work. By being vaccinated you not only protect yourself, you also help reduce the chance of passing flu to your patients some of whom are very vulnerable to complications if they catch it. The most vulnerable in society are the very young, very old, pregnant women, and those with underlying medical conditions. Every year people die from flu. Medical colleagues have a professional responsibility to take up the offer of influenza vaccination, to protect those they care for.

Another important part of your role as a Doctor is to actively promote the vaccine to colleagues, and eligible patients. It sets a powerful example if we, as doctors, demonstrate we take the threat of influenza seriously and are vaccinated to protect ourselves and those we care for. As trusted members of the medical profession we are in a key position to positively influence patients’ choices and to support them in making well informed decisions to protect their health. In order to maximise the benefits from the vaccination programme, it is essential that you are up-to-date with the evidence base supporting the annual flu vaccination programme and are well informed to respond promptly and accurately to any colleagues’ or patients’ concerns.

I would urge all doctors with direct patient contact to get vaccinated as soon as possible and I hope we can lead by setting this good example and becoming role models for other healthcare workers. Your occupational health department or employer can tell you where and when you can be vaccinated.

Further information and resources about influenza and influenza vaccination can be accessed at www.publichealthwales.org/vaccineinformation with information specific to healthcare workers flu vaccine at http://www.wales.nhs.uk/sitesplus/888/page/75321

FluOne is a short e-learning module which contains some basic information about flu and flu vaccination. It takes about 10 minutes to complete and has been fully updated for the 2016-17 season. It can be accessed at www.wales.nhs.uk/immslearning

Yours sincerely

DR FRANK ATHERTON