

Influenza Vaccine Coverage 2015 – 2016 Influenza Season

Summary

For the 2015-2016 influenza season, influenza vaccine coverage among the active clinical population 6 months and older served by IHS, Tribal and Urban (I/T/U) facilities was 35%-36%, essentially the same as the previous year. Coverage from the two different reporting systems used by IHS to monitor influenza vaccine coverage is included in Figures 1 and 2 below.

Among health care personnel (HCP), coverage was 73.9%, compared to 71.8% in the previous year [Figure 4]. More needs to be done to increase both patient and HCP influenza vaccination coverage.

Background

Each year the Indian Health Service (IHS) monitors influenza vaccine coverage among its patients and healthcare personnel (HCP). For patients, data are collected using the IHS Influenza Awareness System (IIAS) as well as the RPMS Influenza vaccine coverage report. Data on HCP are collected from each facility. Methodological details can be found in Appendix A.

Influenza Vaccine Coverage Among Patients

For the 2015-2016 influenza season, approximately one third of the IHS patient population 6 months and older received a flu vaccine. Coverage in all age groups remained essentially the same as coverage reported in the 2014-2015 season. A breakdown of coverage as reported in the 2 different systems is included below in Figures 1 and 2. Figure 3 shows coverage by IHS Area based on the RPMS coverage data, which ranged from 19.1% (CAO) to 43.7% (NAV).

Figure 1: National Influenza Vaccine Coverage – IIAS Influenza Vaccine Coverage Report

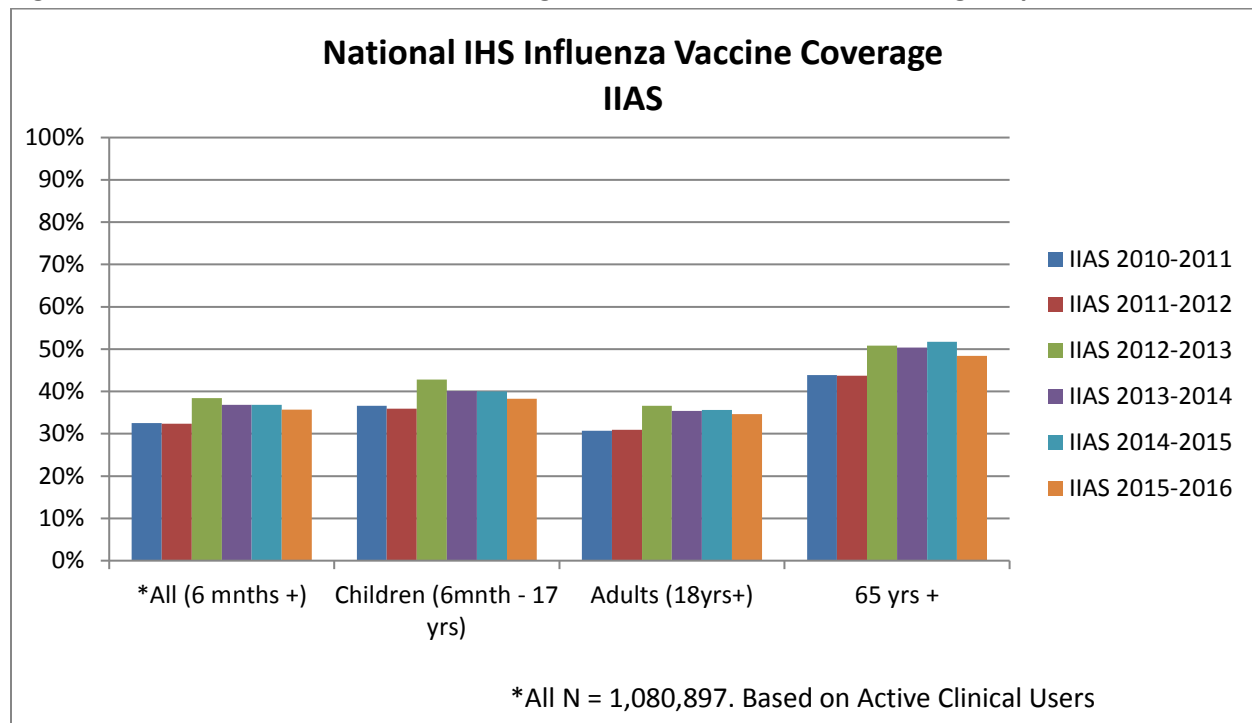


Figure 2: National Influenza Vaccine Coverage – RPMS Influenza Vaccine Coverage Report

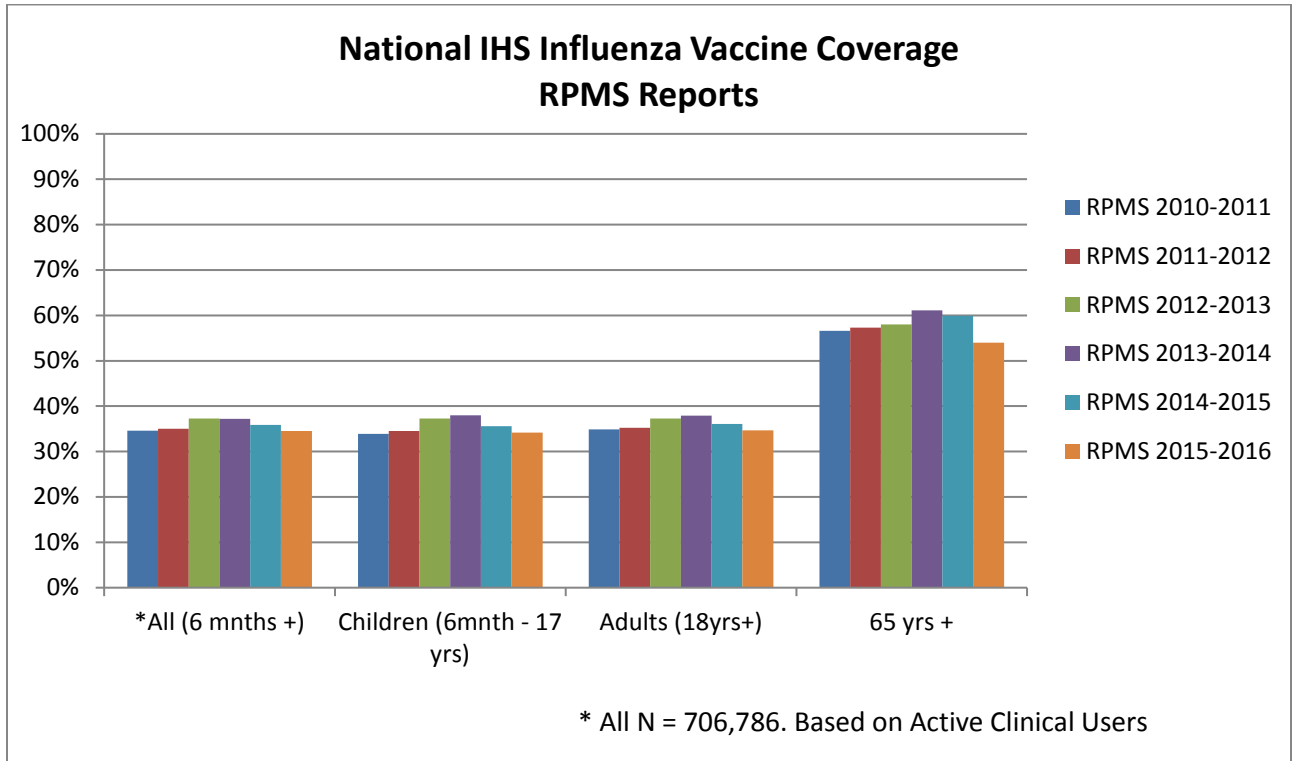
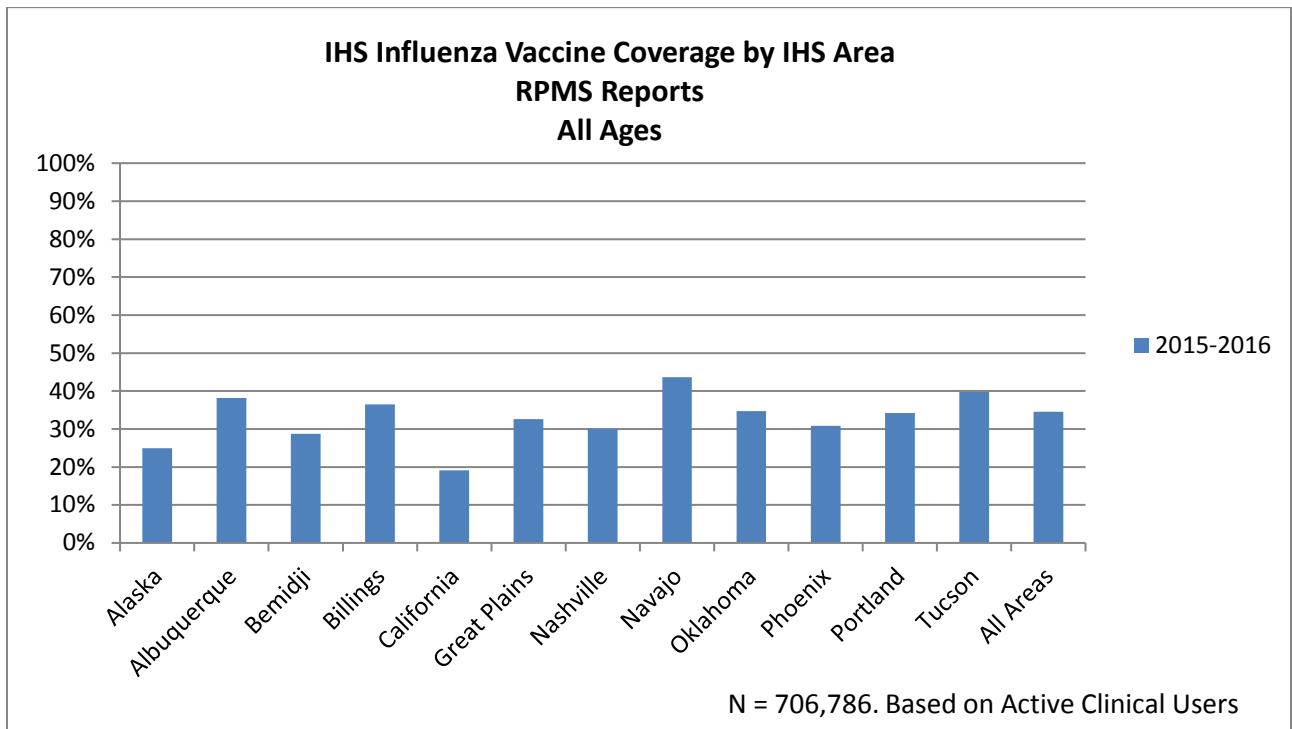


Figure 3: Influenza Vaccine Coverage by IHS Area – RPMS Influenza Vaccine Coverage Report



Healthcare Personnel

For the 2015-2016 influenza season coverage among HCP working in I/T/U facilities increased 2.1% compared to the 2014-15 season (from 71.8% to 73.9%). Medical contraindications and refusals were similar compared to previous years (Figure 4). Coverage by IHS Area is included in Figure 5, and ranged from 55.9% (Alaska) to 89.2% (OKC).

While HCP coverage for all I/T/U increased only slightly, coverage among IHS facilities was higher than coverage in Tribal facilities (Figure 6), and increased by 10.2% compared to the previous year. This may be a result of the implementation of the IHS policy requiring all non-union IHS HCP to be vaccinated against influenza, which was implemented in September 2015. Implementation for all IHS HCP is anticipated for next influenza season.

Figure 4: Influenza Vaccine Coverage among Healthcare Personnel

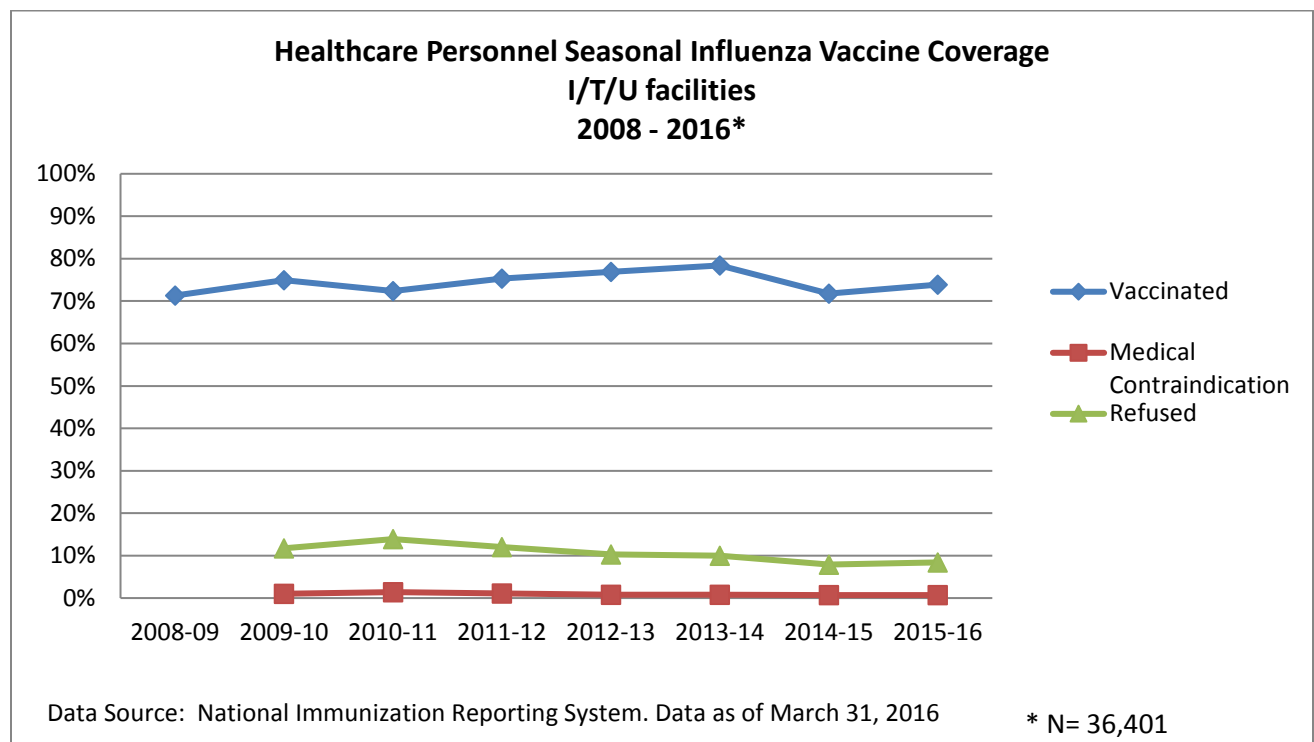


Figure 5: HCP Influenza Vaccine Coverage by IHS Area

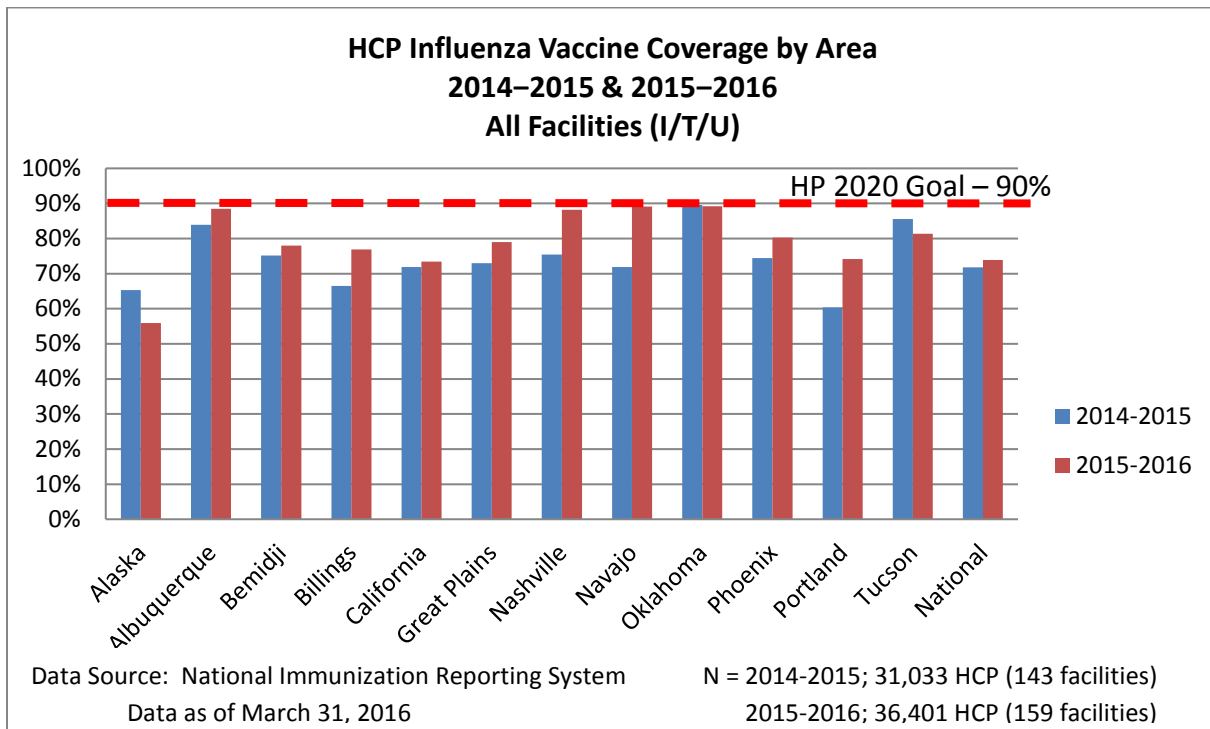
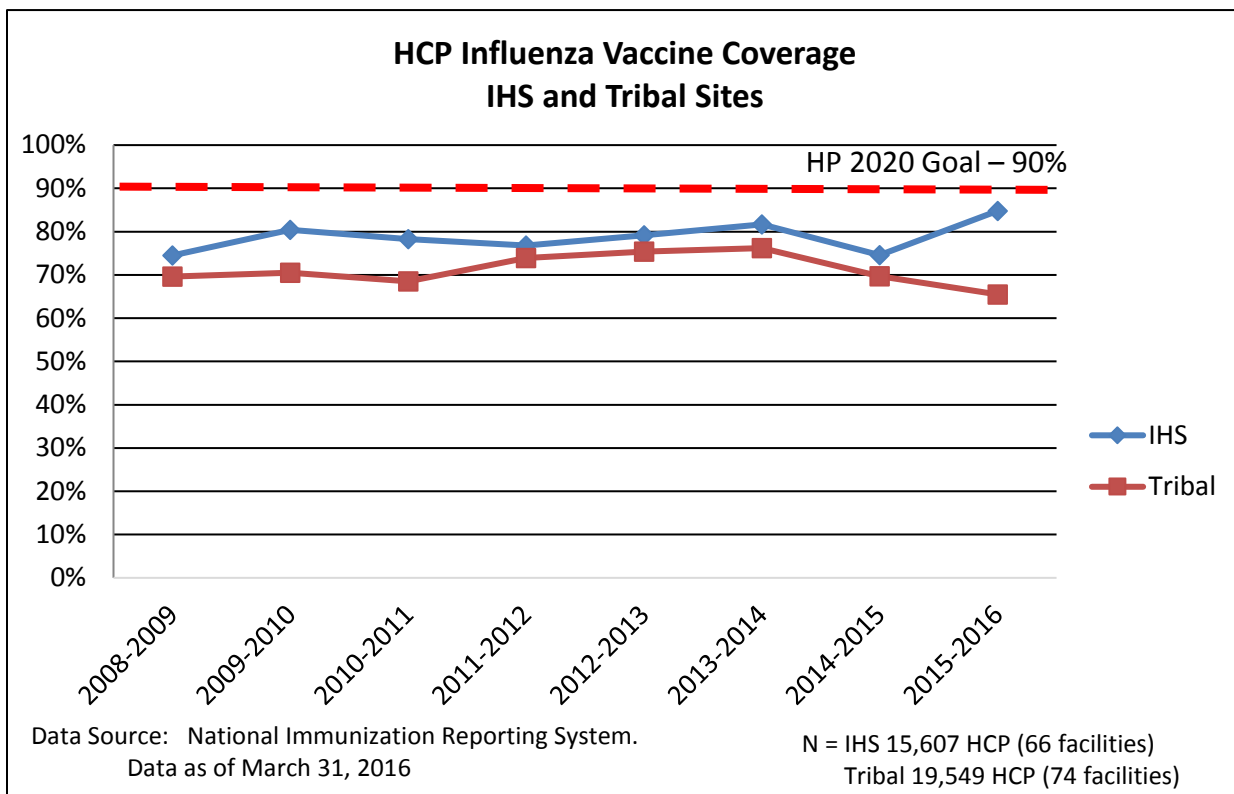


Figure 6: HCP Influenza Coverage: IHS vs. Tribal Sites



Conclusion

While patient coverage estimates differ depending on the data source used, coverage estimates are similar and reflect little to no change compared with the previous year. The IIAS vaccine coverage report shows no difference in coverage since the 2013-2014 season; the RPMS influenza vaccine coverage reports shows a decrease in coverage. For the last 3 seasons just over one third of the active patients seen at an I/T/U facility received an influenza vaccine, indicating that more needs to be done to promote and support vaccination efforts in I/T/U settings. While regional variation in coverage levels may be attributed in part to different vaccination strategies employed in different Areas, differences in AI/AN population size and relative proximity to an I/T/U facility likely play a role. In addition, missing data in the RPMS system, particularly in those IHS Areas with large urban populations with other sources of care, likely contributes to an underestimate of true coverage.

While HCP vaccination coverage among I/T/U facilities increased only slightly compared with previous years, the increase among HCP working in IHS facilities was much greater, and likely reflects the partial implementation of the IHS mandatory HCP influenza vaccination policy. Tribal facilities interested in increasing HCP influenza vaccine coverage levels may wish to consider a mandatory influenza vaccination policy for their HCP.

Appendix A - METHODS

IHS Influenza Awareness System

For patients, national influenza vaccine coverage is monitored weekly throughout the influenza season using the IHS Influenza Awareness System (IIAS). Data are based on vaccine doses administered and recorded in the RPMS system, and are limited to active clinical patients, defined as patients who have had at least 2 visits in the last 3 years. For the 2015-2016 season, the IIAS captured data on 1.0 million active clinical patients from 327 total exporting facilities. Exporting facilities defined by the IIAS include Alaska Village Clinics, Health Centers, Health Locations, Health Stations and Hospitals.

RPMS Influenza Vaccine Coverage Report

Reports on patient influenza vaccine coverage generated using the RPMS influenza vaccine coverage report are collected from each facility on Dec. 31st and March 31st and compiled at the national and IHS Area levels. The RPMS influenza vaccine coverage report is based on vaccine doses administered and recorded in the RPMS system, and is limited to active clinical patients, defined as patients who have had at least 2 visits in the last 3 years. RPMS influenza vaccine coverage reports were collected from 155 facilities, representing 706,786 active clinical patients.

Health Care Personnel Influenza Vaccine Coverage Reports

IHS adopted the National Quality Forum (NQF) Healthcare Personnel influenza vaccination measure. Within this measure, healthcare Personnel (HCP) are defined as any IHS, Tribal or other employee who has been physically present in an IHS, tribal or Urban Indian (I/T/U) healthcare facility for at least 1 working day between October 1 and March 31, regardless of their contact with patients. Because data for HCP are not usually captured in the RPMS patient database, tracking of influenza vaccine among HCP is done either manually or using other software products sites may have in place. For HCP, influenza doses administered either at the facility or elsewhere were counted as “vaccinated”; data on refusals and medical contraindications were also collected. In 2009, there were approximately 38,000 people employed in the I/T/U system, though not all of them worked in healthcare facilities. For the 2015-2016 influenza season HCP data were collected from 159 facilities on 36,401 HCP.

Limitations

While existing data are helpful in providing an overall picture of influenza vaccine coverage and can be useful for monitoring trends over time, there are limitations. Not all sites participate in reporting, and patient data are not de-duplicated between facilities which can lead to an underestimate of coverage.