

Assembly Bill No. 2069

CHAPTER 357

An act to add Section 120393 to the Health and Safety Code, relating to immunizations.

[Approved by Governor September 16, 2014. Filed with
Secretary of State September 16, 2014.]

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

AB 2069, Maienschein. Immunizations: influenza.

Under existing law, the State Department of Public Health administers various programs for the protection of public health. Existing law requires the department to submit a biennial report to the Legislature on the immunization status of young children in the state and the improvements made in ongoing methods of immunization outreach and education in communities where immunization levels are disproportionately low.

This bill would require the department to post specified educational information regarding influenza disease and the availability of influenza vaccinations on the department's Internet Web site, and also would authorize the department to use additional available resources to educate the public regarding influenza, including, among other things, public service announcements. The bill would also make legislative findings and declarations relating to the influenza virus.

The people of the State of California do enact as follows:

SECTION 1. The Legislature finds and declares all of the following:

(a) Influenza, commonly known as the flu, is a serious virus that can cause mild to severe illness, and at times can lead to death. The best way to prevent influenza is by getting an influenza vaccine each year.

(b) Complications of influenza can include bacterial pneumonia, ear infections, sinus infections, dehydration, and worsening of chronic medical conditions, including congestive heart failure, asthma, and diabetes.

(c) Most experts believe that influenza viruses spread mainly by droplets made when people with the flu cough, sneeze, or talk. These droplets can land in the mouths or noses of people who are nearby. Less often, a person might also get the flu by touching a surface or object that has the influenza virus on it and then touch their own mouth, eyes, or nose.

(d) The federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends that everyone who is at least six months of age or older should get an influenza vaccine. This recommendation has been in place since February 24, 2010, when the CDC's Advisory Committee on Immunization

Practices (ACIP) voted for “universal” influenza vaccination in the United States in order to expand protection against the spread of the influenza virus to more people.

(e) The CDC estimates that the national and California seasonal influenza rates for the 2012–13 influenza season of individuals who are six months of age or older are 45 percent and 44.2 percent, respectively.

(f) The public health implications related to influenza vaccinations are important to the State of California because an influenza vaccination can prevent a potentially deadly virus infection and the costs associated with hospitalization can be reduced.

SEC. 2. Section 120393 is added to the Health and Safety Code, to read:

120393. (a) The State Department of Public Health shall post educational information, in accordance with the latest recommendations of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, regarding influenza disease and the availability of influenza vaccinations on the department’s Internet Web site. It is the intent of the Legislature to increase the average number of Californians who receive an influenza vaccination.

(b) The educational information posted on the department’s Internet Web site pursuant to subdivision (a) shall include, but not be limited to, all of the following:

(1) The health benefits of an influenza vaccination.

(2) That the influenza vaccination may be a covered benefit for those with health insurance coverage.

(3) That influenza vaccinations may be available for a minimal fee to those individuals who do not have health insurance coverage.

(4) The locations where free or low-cost vaccinations are available.

(c) The department may use additional available resources to educate the public about the information described in subdivision (b), including public service announcements, media events, public outreach to individuals and groups who are susceptible to influenza, and any other preventive and wellness education efforts recommended by public health officials.