**Subject Line: Destination Vaccination [Retailer Name] − The Elderly, The “Flu,” and Higher Dose Influenza Vaccine**

**Destination Vaccination [Retailer Name]**



Hello [Retailer Name] Champs and Immunizers!

As you know, **influenza can be very dangerous for our elderly customers**, as they are at a greater risk for the disease and its serious complications, and vaccination is the best way to help protect them. Adults 65 years of age and older have several vaccine options available, including the traditional flu vaccine, as well as a higher dose flu vaccine. Studies have shown that the traditional flu vaccine might not work as well for people 65 years of age and older as it does for younger people. This is because of the age-related decline in the immune system that also affects the body’s response to vaccination. The higher dose vaccine is designed specifically to address the age-related decline of the immune system by triggering a stronger immune response following influenza immunization.1

**Based on the protection offered, we have selected to prioritize the higher dose vaccine for our elderly customers,** which demonstrates the focus on the health and wellness of senior patients by pharmacies. **So, when you identify a customer 65 years of age and older for influenza vaccination, please inform them they will be receiving a vaccine designed especially for their age group.** If the higher dose vaccine is not available, a standard-dose vaccine indicated for patients 65 years of age and older remains an option. Vaccination should never be delayed.

Below is some language to help answer questions your customers might have about getting the flu shot or questions they may have about the higher dose vaccine.

**Q1. Why should I get a flu vaccine?**

A1. “The flu,” is a serious and potentially life-threatening disease, especially in adults 65 years of age and older. As we get older, our immune system typically weakens. This generally makes it harder to fight disease and may also make you less responsive to vaccines. As a result, adults 65 years of age and older are at increased risk of flu and its complications. For example, the influenza virus can even lead to death. Each year in the US, more than 6 out of 10 flu-related hospital stays and 9 out of 10 flu-related deaths occur in people 65 years of age and older.2 The best way to help protect yourself against the flu is to get vaccinated.

**Q2. Even though I’m getting older, I’m still pretty healthy. Do I still need a shot?**

**A2.** The flu is especially dangerous for people with chronic conditions, such as diabetes, heart disease, and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD), which commonly affect older adults.3 If I recall correctly, you have (insert chronic condition here), which puts you in a high-risk category. The best way to help protect against the flu is to get vaccinated.

**Q3. What is the difference between the traditional and higher dose flu shots?**

A3. The higher dose vaccine is designed specifically for adults 65 years of age and older. The body’s ability to fight disease declines with age due to a weakening of the immune system, which results in the body producing less antibody to help fight infection from the flu virus. Studies have shown that the traditional flu vaccine might not work as well for people 65 years of age and older as it does for younger people. This is because the age-related decline in the immune system also affects the body’s response to vaccination.2 We have selected to vaccinate you with the vaccine designed specifically for adults 65 and older.

**Q4. How does it work?**

A4. The higher dose flu vaccine, which contains 4 times the antigen compared with the traditional, standard-dose vaccine, causes the body to produce more antibody against the flu virus. Antibodies help the immune system respond and protect against infection when exposed to the virus, which can result in a stronger immune response than the traditional vaccine.1

**Q5. Shouldn’t I get the vaccine that covers more virus strains?**

A5. Quadrivalent influenza vaccines cover 4 virus strains. However, studies have shown that the traditional flu vaccine might not work as well for people 65 years of age and older as it does for younger people because the age-related decline in the immune system also affects the body’s response to vaccination1. The higher-dose flu vaccine, which contains 4 times the antigen compared with the traditional, standard-dose vaccine, causes the body to produce more antibody against the flu virus. Antibodies help protect against infection.1 Based on that, we recommend that you get immunized you with the vaccine designed specifically for you.

**Q6. If the higher dose vaccine has more antigen, does it cause more side effects?**

A6. Although some side effects were reported more frequently after vaccination with the higher dose vaccine, the most common side effects experienced were mild and temporary. These included pain, redness, and swelling at the injection site, as well as headache, muscle aches, fever, and malaise. Most people had minimal or no side effects after receiving the higher dose vaccine.1

**Q7. Is it covered by Medicare Part B?**

A7. Yes. The higher dose vaccine option is covered by Medicare Part B benefit with no co-pay, for those who are Medicare beneficiaries.4

**Q8. When should I get vaccinated?**

A8. No matter which vaccine you choose, vaccination early in the flu season is especially important for adults 65 years of age and older. It is important to get immunized against the flu not only to help protect yourself, but also to help prevent the spread of the flu to those around you, such as family members and friends.2

**Remember: Every time we connect with a customer during influenza season, we should be asking them to get vaccinated, if appropriate. This is especially true for our elderly customers.**

We hope you find that this language helps you answer questions from your elderly patients on influenza and the higher dose vaccine, as we work to help ensure their overall health and wellness through vaccination. Stay tuned for more information to prepare you and your staff to be the **Destination Vaccination** for your elderly customers. If you have questions, please contact [your regional contact].

Sincerely,

[xxx]

**References**: **1.** Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Fluzone high-dose seasonal influenza vaccine. <http://www.cdc.gov/flu/protect/vaccine/qa_fluzone.htm>. Accessed July 10, 2015.

**2.** CDC. What you should know and do this flu season if you are 65 years and older. <http://www.cdc.gov/flu/about/disease/65over.htm>. Accessed July 10, 2015. **3.** CDC. People at high risk of developing flu–related complications. <http://www.cdc.gov/flu/about/disease/high_risk.htm>. Accessed July 10, 2015. **4.** Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMMS). *2012-2013 Immunizers' Question and Answer Guide to Medicare Part B, Medicaid and CHIP Coverage of Seasonal Influenza and Pneumococcal Vaccinations.* Baltimore, MD: Center for Medicare and Medicaid Services; 2012.

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