Partnership for a Back to School Infection Prevention Campaign

Annually there is a push to vaccinate against influenza, as well as many other scheduled vaccinations for children and adults. Most of these vaccinations are given to prevent respiratory diseases. However, we are still missing the significant impact of flu-like illnesses and other bacteria. With more diligent education and practice of Hand Awareness by both physician practices and patients, there would be concomitant reduction in preventable respiratory and some gastro-intestinal diseases.

Imagine NEVER being sick again from a respiratory or gastro-intestinal disease again! Yes it is achievable if you and your community become more “Hand Aware”. Family Medicine (Pediatric and Internal Medicine) physicians are best suited to teach infection prevention (primary and secondary) and treat any break through illnesses in their patient populations. As the CDC and HHS have spent a great deal of money promoting vaccination as the prevention for flu, your office (AAFP, AMA or AAP members) is in a great position to offer a more comprehensive approach to annual and seasonal infectious diseases as well as to provide patients with a lifelong habit of true primary infection prevention against many other respiratory and gastro-intestinal diseases that are not prevented by vaccination or treated by antibiotic, antiviral or antifungal medication.

For over 14 years, the Henry the Hand Foundation has been promoting true primary infection prevention techniques and strategies that are proven to reduce the spread of respiratory and gastro-intestinal diseases. By using Henry the Hand as the change agent, teaching Hand Awareness (hand hygiene, respiratory etiquette and cross contamination) is simple, fun and memorable for all ages. These principles have been promoted through effective demonstration and reinforcement tools. These include:

**The 4 Principles of Hand Awareness:**

1. **WASH** your hands when they are dirty and BEFORE eating.
2. **DO NOT** cough into your hands.
3. **DO NOT** sneeze into your hands.
4. Above all, **DO NOT** put your fingers into your eyes, nose or mouth.

The 4 Principles of Hand Awareness have been endorsed by the AMA and AAFP.

The concept “Do not touch the T Zone!” revolutionizes the understanding of how both healthcare worker and patient protect themselves from many preventable infectious diseases. This is the 4th Principle of Hand Awareness as the T Zone is the mucous membranes of the eyes, nose, and mouth. Promoting this will be a real stride forward in the effort of primary infection prevention education. The Henry the Hand Health Shield (T Zone protector) is a good teaching device and at times a protection device when sitting face to face with an ill patient while taking BP and admitting them to the office.
We would like to see (AAFP or AAP) or your office launch this simple comprehensive Infection Prevention Partnership with Dr. Will Sawyer and Henry the Hand Foundation. Many other partners can be included in this “Back to School” Campaign, which should be focused on educating your patients and the general public about the 4 Principles of Hand Awareness and the benefits of vaccination. To do so, we have created an Infection Prevention Physician’s Office Tool Kit which includes effective repositional wall graphics (posters), Handwashing Instruction static clings for sink mirrors, Champion Handwasher stickers, Do Not Touch the T Zone stickers and a “T Zone” protector (health shield). Please review the sample Tool Kit to see how the reinforcement tools will help your practice more effectively teach seasonal flu and flu-like illness prevention as you are providing the appropriate treatments and vaccinations. Other Infection Prevention reinforcement tools may be added to the tool kit by to educate the patients on the benefits for your campaign. The Infection Prevention School Partnership Flier is available at www.henrythehand.com or you can hyperlink to your web site to direct your patients to download.

This will help all of us in our Comprehensive Flu Prevention Campaign this year:

“Do not touch the T Zone, handwash regularly and don’t hesitate to vaccinate”!

Thank you,

For lending your hand to your patient’s safety and wellbeing!

Will Sawyer, MD

Dr. Will

Dr.will@henrythehand.com

513-769-4951