National Prescribing Service Limited

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Health professionals reminded of importance of reporting adverse events

Doctors, pharmacists and nurses are reminded of the importance of accurately reporting adverse medicine events and ways to do so following an increase of consumer reports to the Adverse Medicine Events line about the seasonal flu vaccine.

The Adverse Medicines Events (AME) phone line, funded by the National Prescribing Service, has had a spike in calls since Friday from parents whose children have experienced illnesses after having the seasonal flu vaccine.

"Reporting adverse events is a vital part of post-marketing surveillance of any new medicine in determining its safety and efficacy in the community," NPS CEO Dr Lynn Weekes said.

"Health professionals have a duty of care to report suspected reactions to new medicines and vaccines as this is the only way in which information can be accurately collected and used in the interest of public health," Dr Weekes said.

Health professionals can report adverse drug reactions to the TGA via the adverse drug reaction reporting system website or the TGA blue card. Adverse events relating to vaccines can also be reported via State health departments. The AME phone line is available for consumers to report adverse events.

It is particularly important health professionals record as much information as possible for the adverse event report, including batch numbers, which helps authorities determine whether cases are isolated or there is a wide-spread issue.

"It is normal for there to be a sudden spike in consumer reports about a product when it has received negative media attention.

"While the number of calls about the seasonal flu vaccine has decreased in the last 24 hours, health professionals should remain alert to patient concerns about possible reactions to the vaccine and continue to report suspected cases," Dr Weekes said.

ENDS

All media enquiries about the AME line should go to Katie Butt, NPS Media Adviser, on 02 8217 8667 or kbutt@nps.org.au

The National Prescribing Service Limited (NPS) is an independent, not-for-profit organisation for quality use of medicines funded by the Australian Government Department of Health and Ageing.

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