

Rural Minorities Lag on Flu, Pneumonia Immunization

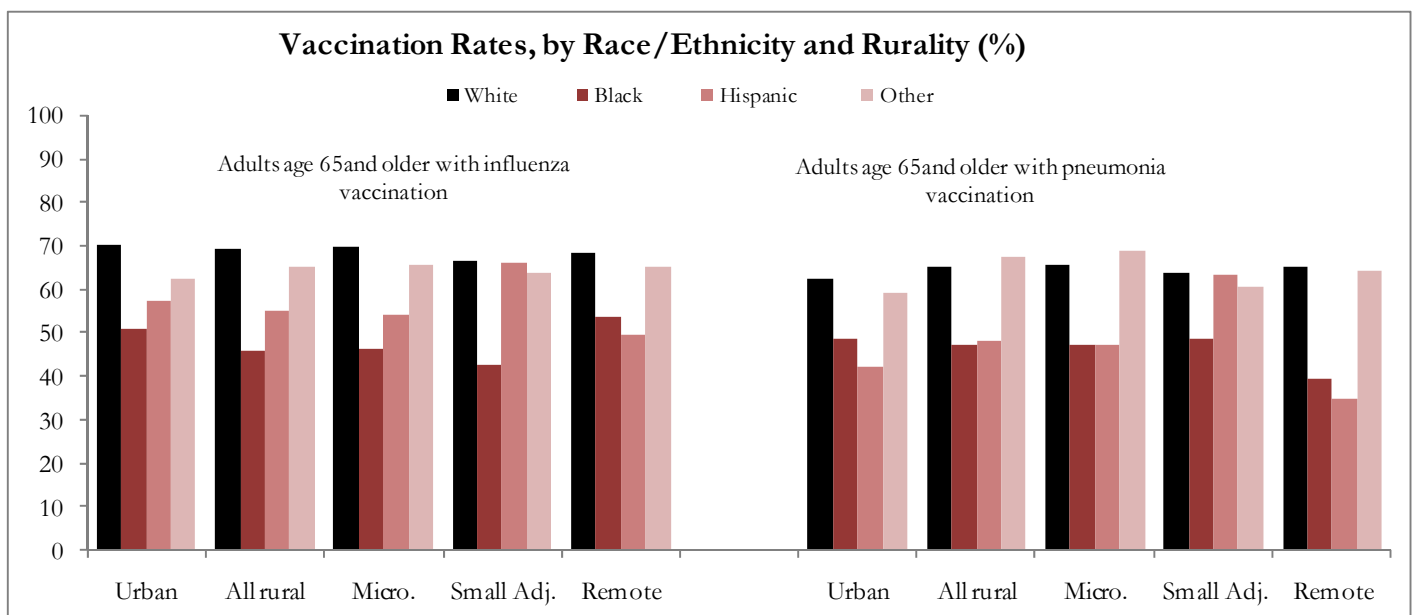
Influenza is estimated to cost \$90 Billion each year in the US, when both direct medical costs and lost productivity are considered. Most of this burden, and most deaths, fall on persons over age 65, leading the US Preventive Services Task Force (USPSTF) to recommend annual immunization for everyone in this age group. Pneumonia has been estimated to cost \$10 Billion each year, in addition to its toll in death. Thus, the USPSTF also recommends that persons over 65 receive pneumonia vaccine. Present immunization rates fall far short of the Healthy People 2010 goal of 90% coverage, and disparities experienced by rural African American and Hispanic populations are marked.

Annual Influenza Vaccination

- While more than two-thirds of rural white adults (69%) over age 65 received the flu vaccine in 2006, only 57% of Hispanic adults and 42% of African American adults were vaccinated.
- Vaccination rates among minorities fluctuated across the types of rural counties; Hispanics in Small Adjacent counties had similar vaccination rates to whites, while blacks in Remote rural counties had a higher rate (54%) than urban blacks (51%).

Lifetime Pneumonia Vaccination

- African American and Hispanic adults are markedly less likely to have received a pneumonia vaccination than are their white counterparts.



A full copy of the report can be obtained from the SC Rural Health Research Center website: <http://rhr.sph.sc.edu>

