



Health Services
LOS ANGELES COUNTY

November 30, 2011

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To ensure access to high-quality, patient-centered, cost-effective health care to Los Angeles County residents through direct services at DHS facilities and through collaboration with community and university partners.

TO: All DHS Workforce Members
FROM: Mitchell H. Katz, M.D. Director
SUBJECT: **MANDATORY INFLUENZA VACCINATION POLICY**

This memorandum is to inform you that the Department of Health Services (DHS) is implementing a mandatory influenza vaccination policy (attached). The intent of the policy is to support our commitment to ensure delivery of safe quality health care to our patients by minimizing the spread of seasonal flu virus from patient to health care worker and from health care worker to patient.

The best way to protect our patients and workforce from diseases like influenza in the healthcare setting is to vaccinate all workforce members who come in contact with patients.

Joint Commission standards require us to implement an influenza program. California law, Health & Safety Code Section 1288.7 and California Code of Regulations, Title 8, Section 5199, Aerosol Transmissible Disease Standard require either influenza vaccination or signing of a declination form for workforce who decline vaccinations. This includes clinic and office-based staff. Workforce members who decline vaccination for any reason will be required to wear a surgical mask during influenza season whenever they are within 3 feet of a patient.

In light of the national influenza initiatives of 2020 and Joint Commission goals of 90% compliance with influenza vaccination rates, and the importance of influenza vaccination in minimizing illness and death among patients, workforce, family and friends, I am encouraging all workforce members to get an influenza vaccination.

The following information is provided to help you understand the provisions of the policy and answer questions you might have:

- **To whom does this policy apply?**
This policy applies to all workforce members (employees, contract staff, affiliates, volunteers, trainees, students, and vendors [category A-DHS Policy 822.001]).
- **Effective Date:** This policy was effective November 1, 2011, the deadline for compliance with vaccination/declination has been extended to December 15, 2011. Anyone who has submitted a declination must begin wearing a mask starting December 16, 2011. Normally, the deadlines would be November 15 and 16, respectively.



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- **What if I don't want a flu shot or have medical reasons?**
If you do not obtain a flu shot you will be required to sign a declination form, as required by law, and wear a surgical mask whenever you work within 3 feet of a patient.
- **How long is the influenza season?**
In the Northern Hemisphere, the flu season generally extends from September to March. It can sometimes start earlier or last longer. DHS will provide that information to the workforce based on local and/or state public health official data.
- **What if I receive my vaccination at an outside facility?**
You will need to provide written documentation/proof of vaccination on an official immunization record or the health provider's stationery.
- **How will I know if the workforce member has been vaccinated?**
The workforce member will have a sticker affixed to his/her badge that indicates he/she received the vaccination.
- **Where do I get a declination form?**
Your facility Employee Health Services (EHS) department can provide the declination form.
- **How much does the vaccination cost?**
Vaccinations are free of cost to workforce members.
- **I don't have time to get a flu shot.**
You can obtain a vaccination at your facility EHS, generally, without an appointment. EHS will also be hosting mobile flu shot clinics and other outreach activities during all shifts to provide access to the workforce.
- **I'm afraid I will get sick after getting the shot.**
The influenza virus shot is not live virus so you won't get sick from the flu shot, but you might experience some redness and soreness at the injection site, mild low grade fever, and aches that last 1-2 days.

If you have any questions concerning the new policy, please contact your facility EHS department.

MHK:lc
I:/flu policy memo5

Attachment

c: Christina Ghaly, M.D.
Hal F. Yee, Jr., M.D., Ph.D.
John F. Schunhoff, Ph.D.
Gregory Polk
Ann Marinovich
Facility Chief Executive Officers
Facility Chief Medical Officers
Facility Chief Nursing Officers
Facility Infection Control Officers
Facility Employee Health Services Coordinators



Health Services
LOS ANGELES COUNTY

POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

SUBJECT: INFLUENZA VACCINATIONS FOR WORKFORCE MEMBERS

POLICY NO: 334.200

PURPOSE:

To promote DHS' commitment to delivery of safe quality healthcare to our patients by minimizing the transmission of seasonal influenza (flu) virus from workforce member to patients and visitors, as well as to protect the workforce from patient transmitted influenza. Vaccination will also promote workplace safety by reducing workforce absenteeism due to influenza-like symptoms.

POLICY:

As a condition of employment/assignment and continued employment/assignment, an annual influenza vaccination is mandatory for every workforce member who works in a DHS facility that provides patient care unless the workforce member completes and signs an informed declination form.

A sticker will be affixed to the badge of workforce members who have received the influenza vaccination; other means of verification may be adopted as necessary.

DHS will determine the dates of the anticipated influenza season based on local and/or state public health official data and provide instruction to the workforce to begin obtaining vaccinations. Generally the influenza season for the Northern Hemisphere extends from September to March.

Compliance with annual mandatory influenza vaccination will be required by November 15 of each year. This deadline may be modified if influenza vaccine availability is limited for the current season. **ALL** workforce members who have not received the influenza vaccination by November 15 will be required to wear a surgical mask whenever they are within three (3) feet of a patient beginning November 16 and extending for the remaining duration of the influenza season. N-95 respirators may be an acceptable alternative for patients in airborne precautions. Employees must discard masks if they become wet and use a new mask.

For the 2011-12 influenza season, the deadline for getting an influenza vaccination is extended to December 15, 2011. Workforce members who are not vaccinated and/or decline the influenza vaccination must wear a surgical mask beginning December 16, 2011.

APPROVED BY: 
REVIEW DATES:

EFFECTIVE DATE: November 1, 2011
SUPERSEDES:

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH SERVICES COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES

SUBJECT: INFLUENZA VACCINATIONS FOR WORKFORCE MEMBERS

POLICY NO.: 334.200

The particular epidemiology of influenza in any given season and availability of influenza vaccine may lead to a requirement that unvaccinated individuals begin wearing a mask prior to or after November 16 of each year. If this is necessary, appropriate communications will be disseminated to all staff.

Workforce members will be required to acknowledge receipt of this policy and declare adherence to its provisions.

DHS will offer onsite influenza vaccination to all workforce members at no cost to the workforce member.

DEFINITION:

Workforce member means an employee, contract staff, affiliate, volunteer, trainee, student and any other person who performs work under the control of DHS, whether or not they receive compensation from the County.

PROCEDURE:

Communication

Prior to the onset of the annual influenza season, DHS will inform staff of the requirement to be vaccinated, the dates the influenza vaccine will be available and that the vaccine will be provided to them at no cost. DHS will provide education to workforce members about the influenza vaccine, non-vaccine control measures (appropriate precautions), and diagnosis, transmission and potential impact to the patients and workforce member, and consequences for failure to adhere to the policy.

Convenient access to vaccination such as vaccination clinics will be provided during all work shifts.

Verification and Declination

In accordance with DHS Policy 925.100, "Immunization of Workforce Member," workforce members who decline the influenza vaccination must complete and submit an EHS Seasonal Influenza Declination Form to the hospital/facility Employee Health Services department.

EFFECTIVE DATE: November 1, 2011

SUPERSEDES:

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DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH SERVICES COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES

SUBJECT: INFLUENZA VACCINATIONS FOR WORKFORCE MEMBERS

POLICY NO.: 334.200

If the vaccination was performed outside DHS, the workforce member must provide written documentation/proof of vaccination on an official immunization record or the health facility/provider's stationery.

Once the workforce member has been vaccinated he/she will receive a sticker to be placed on his/her badge indicating he/she has been vaccinated against the influenza virus.

In times of vaccination shortage, priority for vaccination will be given to workforce members who provide direct patient care.

Accountability

Managers/supervisors are responsible for ensuring their workforce is made aware of and adhere to the provisions of this policy. Any workforce member who does not have a sticker on their badge indicating they received the influenza vaccination must wear a surgical mask whenever working within 3 feet of a patient. Supervisors will be responsible for ensuring such workforce members wear their mask.

Follow-up and Review

DHS must conduct an annual review of all declination forms/statement to identify why workforce members did not participate in the vaccination program and develop strategies/innovations to address those reasons in order to increase vaccination rates.

AUTHORITY:

Joint Commission Standards – Infection Control 02.03.01, 02.04.01
SB 739 (Chapter 526, Statutes of 2006)
California Health & Safety Code, Section 1288.7
California Code of Regulations, Title 8, Section 5199

REFERENCES:

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Infection Control Guidance
DHS Policy 925.100, Immunization of Workforce Members

EFFECTIVE DATE: November 1, 2011

SUPERSEDES:

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