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SAPC INFORMATION NOTICE 24-09
Supersedes IN 23-11

October 17, 2024

TO: Los Angeles County Substance Use Disorder
SAPC – All Service Providers

FROM: Gary Tsai, M.D., Bureau Director 
Substance Abuse Prevention and Control Bureau

SUBJECT: **COVID-19 AND INFLUENZA VACCINATION REQUIREMENTS,
MASKING GUIDANCE, AND REPORTING RESPONSIBILITIES**

The County of Los Angeles Department of Public Health (Public Health), Substance Abuse Prevention and Control Bureau (SAPC) is issuing Information Notice #24-09 to provide updated requirements regarding vaccinations, masking guidelines, and reporting guidelines applicable to all SAPC service providers and their staff performing duties as part of any SAPC contracts and/or agreements (e.g., Memorandum of Understanding). Public Health requirements may exceed those outlined under the [State of California Department of Health Care Services \(DHCS\) Behavioral Health Information Notice No. 23-014](#), and the [California Department of Public Health \(CDPH\) guidelines](#).

The Public Health Officer Orders (HOO) pertaining to this notice include:

- [Annual Influenza Immunization or Masking and Addition of Updated COVID-19 Immunization or Masking Requirement for Healthcare Personnel during Respiratory Virus Season](#)
- [Updated COVID-19 Reporting Requirements](#)

The current Public Health HOO and guidelines are available at [Public Health’s COVID-19 webpage](#).

Influenza and COVID-19 Vaccination Requirements

All staff working under a Public Health contract or agreement in outpatient, opioid treatment program, residential, recovery bridge housing settings, DUI, prevention, harm reduction and any setting other than the specified licensed healthcare settings described below are strongly encouraged, but not required, to receive the currently recommended influenza and COVID-19 vaccines. Immunizations are the best way to protect against serious illness and death caused by influenza and COVID-19.

All staff who have direct patient contact or work in patient care areas (including paid/unpaid employees, volunteers, students, contractors, etc.) working under a Public Health contract or agreement in specified licensed healthcare settingsⁱ, including Chemical Dependency Recovery Hospitals and Acute Psychiatric Hospitals (ASAM 3.7 and 4.0 Levels of Care), should receive the annual influenza vaccine and the most recent updated COVID-19 vaccine authorized for use in the United States for the current respiratory virus season. Beginning **November 1, 2024**, all applicable staff working in specified licensed healthcare settings who decline or have not yet received these versions of the influenza vaccine and COVID-19 vaccine must wear a respiratory mask while in contact with patients or working in patient care areas for the duration of the respiratory virus season (annually defined as November 1st through April 30th). Applicable staff who decline the updated influenza and COVID-19 vaccinations must provide their employer a written declaration that they have declined the applicable vaccination on a form provided by their employer.

Masking Guidance

Staff in specified licensed healthcare settings should follow [Infection Prevention Guidance for Healthcare \(including EMS\) Personnel](#)

Staff in any setting other than the specified licensed healthcare settings should follow the LAC DPH COVID-19 and ARI [Guidance for Community Congregate Settings](#) and [COVID-19 masking guidance](#).

All staff working in healthcare settings who provide direct patient care or work in a patient care area, including SUD treatment sites, are highly encouraged but no longer required to wear a mask unless they are not vaccinated and working in a specified licensed healthcare setting with the current versions of the Influenza and COVID-19 vaccine. Patients and visitors within healthcare settings are strongly encouraged but not required to wear a mask unless symptomatic with respiratory virus symptoms or if they have tested positive for COVID-19.

Patients and visitors must be provided a clean mask upon request. All patients, staff, or visitors with respiratory virus symptoms should wear a well-fitting surgical mask or respirator around others. Patients with COVID-19 must wear a well-fitting surgical mask or respirator when around others for ten days following the date their symptoms began or the date of an asymptomatic positive COVID-19 test. All close contacts should also wear

a well-fitting surgical mask or respirator when around others for ten days after the date of their first close contact exposure.

Staff with respiratory virus symptoms should wear a well-fitting surgical mask or respirator around others. Staff who tested positive for COVID-19 who are permitted to return to work must wear a well-fitting surgical mask or respirator around others through ten days following the date their symptoms began or the date of an asymptomatic positive COVID-19 test. Staff are required to wear fit-tested N95 respirators when caring for patients with a current COVID-19 infection. Visitors spending time with patients with COVID-19 infection should be provided with the same type of PPE used by facility staff if visiting someone in isolation. Visitors do not need a fit-tested N95 respirator but should be instructed on how to perform a seal check. Visitors should be advised to defer their visit if they have active symptoms of a respiratory infection or have had close contact with someone with COVID-19 in the past ten days.

COVID-19 Testing

Specified licensed healthcare settings should follow [Infection Prevention Guidance for Healthcare \(including EMS\) Personnel](#)

Any setting other than the specified licensed healthcare settings should follow the LAC DPH COVID-19 and ARI [Guidance for Community Congregate Settings](#)

SAPC provider agencies should conduct COVID-19 testing as recommended in current State and Local Health Officer Orders. SAPC provider agencies may consider various screening testing strategies (point in time testing, serial testing, etc.) based on local acute respiratory illness transmission trends. SAPC provider personnel may also consider routine diagnostic screening testing if their clients have underlying immunocompromising conditions (e.g., organ transplantation, cancer treatment) due to the greater risks such individuals face if they contract COVID-19.

Reporting Requirements for Acute Respiratory Illnesses (including COVID-19)

LA County DPH Reporting Requirements:

In Los Angeles County, ongoing COVID-19 and acute respiratory illness surveillance necessitates mandatory reporting from healthcare facilities and community settings as outlined in the [LA County Health Officer Order](#).

COVID-19 & Acute Respiratory Illness (ARI) Reporting - Instructions for Multiple Sectors

- **Licensed healthcare settings**, such as chemical dependency hospitals, are required to report according to the instructions under the category “Acute Hospital Settings” or “Other Healthcare Settings”, depending on the setting.
- **Community congregate settings**, including residential and recovery bridge housing settings, are required to report based on the instructions under the category “Community settings”, sub-category “Community Congregate Settings”.

- **Non-congregate settings**, including prevention, DUI, outpatient, and OTP settings are required to report according to the instructions under the category “Community settings”, sub-category “Workplaces”.

Reporting instructions by setting type available at [COVID-19 & Acute Respiratory Illness \(ARI\) Reporting - Instructions for Multiple Sectors](#).

SAPC Reporting Requirements:

Report within (1) business day of being notified that Public Health has determined there is an outbreak requiring further investigation in any SAPC-contracted site or level of care by submitting an Adverse Event [Reporting Form](#) to SAPCMonitoring@ph.lacounty.gov.

DHCS Reporting Requirements:

Report within (1) business day of being notified that Public Health has determined there is an outbreak requiring further investigation in any SAPC-contracted site or level of care to: DHCSLCBcom@dhcs.ca.gov

Additional Resources

Below are additional resources that providers may find helpful:

- Stay informed by tracking respiratory illness trends in LA County using LA DPH [RespWatch Dashboard](#)
- [Los Angeles County COVID-19 Infection Prevention Guidance for Healthcare Personnel](#)
- [Los Angeles County COVID-19 Infection Prevention Control Recommendations and Best Practices for Community Care Facilities](#)
- [Los Angeles County COVID-19 and Common Respiratory Viruses Guidance for Community Congregate Settings](#) (including Community Care Facilities)
- [Los Angeles County COVID-19 Masking Guidance](#)
- [Los Angeles County Department of Public Health COVID-19 Homepage](#)
- [Cal/OSHA Aerosol Transmissible Diseases \(ATD\) Standards](#)
- [CDPH COVID-19 Resources](#)
- CDPH: Masking Guidelines in Healthcare [Settings](#)
- [CDPH: Flu and COVID-19 Vaccines](#)

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Specified Licensed Healthcare Facilities

ⁱ For the purposes of vaccination requirements, Specified Licensed Healthcare Facilities are defined within the latest version of the Los Angeles County Health Officer Order:

- i. General Acute Care Hospitals
- ii. Skilled Nursing Facilities (including Subacute Facilities)
- iii. Intermediate Care Facilities
- iv. Emergency Medical Services (EMS) Provider Agencies
- v. Congregate Living Health Facilities
- vi. Chemical Dependency Recovery Hospitals
- vii. Acute Psychiatric Hospitals
- viii. Dialysis Centers
- ix. Home Health Agencies
- x. Primary Care Clinics
- xi. Ambulatory Surgery Centers
- xii. Hospice Facilities