

Infection Control Policies and Procedures

Influenza Immunization Policy for Healthcare Personnel

PURPOSE

To help protect staff, non-employees, patients and families of _____ from acquiring seasonal influenza disease and to help prevent the unnecessary spread of influenza between employees, non-employees, patients and families. To remain in compliance with state regulations regarding nursing home employees influenza vaccination requirements. This is accomplished through the requirement that all healthcare personnel receive annual influenza vaccination.

DEFINITION

Healthcare personnel are defined as all persons whose occupation involve contact with patients or contaminated material in a healthcare, home healthcare, or clinical laboratory setting. Healthcare personnel are engaged in a range of occupations, many of which include patient contact even though they do not involve direct provision of patient care, such as dietary and housekeeping services.

Healthcare personnel include but are not limited to: clinical and non-clinical employees, licensed independent practitioners, temporary workers, adult students, physicians and independent contractors.

GENERAL INFORMATION

On February 24, 2010, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) expanded the recommendations for influenza vaccination to everyone aged six months and older. The expanded recommendation went into effect in the 2010 - 2011 influenza season. The new recommendation seeks to remove barriers to influenza immunization and signals the importance of preventing influenza across the entire population. Within this priority population is the recommendation that all healthcare personnel are vaccinated annually with influenza vaccination.

Historically, national rates for healthcare worker influenza vaccination have been low, 42% according to the CDC, despite recommendations for this population to be vaccinated. By having our healthcare personnel vaccinated against influenza, we continue to promote a culture of patient safety by helping to prevent facility acquired influenza transmission to patients and families, as well as protecting staff against workplace transmission. Vaccination of _____ staff will also reduce workplace absenteeism due to influenza illness, further reducing operational costs of providing care.

POLICY

As a condition of employment/medical staff privileges/independent contractor agreements/student nurse teachers, _____ requires annual influenza vaccination of all _____ workers that have job duties or physical presence inside _____ in the course of conducting their work.

PROCEDURES

I. WHERE and WHEN TO GET THE VACCINE:

- a. Staff must receive influenza vaccine provided by _____ or provide written proof of receipt of required influenza vaccine(s) from another source. _____ provides influenza vaccine for its employees free of charge. Immunization or proof of immunization must be completed annually.
- b. New hires will be required to present proof of influenza immunization, or will be given the influenza vaccine at their health screening if hire date is between receipt of flu vaccine (October 21 – March 31). New hires hired outside of the months when influenza vaccine is available will be notified of the policy and will be expected to comply with vaccination the next influenza season.
- c. _____ will set the relevant dates of the anticipated influenza season each year which will correspond to the dates for masking. In general, influenza season typically extends from November to March, but can start earlier or extend longer in certain years.
- d. Compliance with annual mandatory influenza vaccination will be required no later than October 21st.

II. PRIORITIZATION:

- a. Influenza vaccine provided by _____ will be prioritized to staff employed by _____, physicians/providers working at _____, and volunteers.
- b. Contractors and vendors will not be prioritized to receive _____ purchased influenza vaccines but must provide proof of annual influenza vaccination.
- c. Upon vaccination or verification of influenza vaccination received elsewhere, staff will receive a sticker to be worn on their badge to indicate they are in compliance with the influenza vaccination policy.

III. COMMUNICATION/EDUCATION:

- a. Prior to the annual onset of influenza season, the organization will inform staff of the requirement for vaccination, the dates when influenza vaccine(s) are available, and the fact that vaccines will be provided at no cost to them. Communication will be through normal information distribution. Education on influenza virus and the vaccine will be completed throughout the organization on an ongoing basis. Staff will also be informed of the procedures and approved reasons for declining vaccine and the consequences of refusing vaccination.

- b. The organization will continue to use strategies to provide for convenient vaccine access, including vaccination clinics, vaccination access during all work shifts, and modeling and support by _____ leaders.

IV. EXEMPTIONS:

- a. Only healthcare personnel meeting the medical contraindications listed below will be exempt from annual influenza vaccination. Contraindications are limited to specific medical circumstances. Please see Human Resources with any questions.
- b. Healthcare personnel who meet the requirements of contraindication for influenza vaccination must complete a written medical declination form.
- c. Staff who does not receive influenza vaccination due to a medical contraindication must wear a mask at all times during the duration of the scheduled shift for the duration of the influenza season, when providing services at all _____. (See Consequences and Non-Compliance below).

V. APPROVED CONTRAINDICATIONS TO INFLUENZA VACCINATION:

Any person declining vaccine must have one of the valid contraindications, as listed below.

- a. Persons with severe (life-threatening) allergies to eggs or to other components of the influenza vaccine. Documentation from a licensed healthcare provider is required (see Verification of Contraindications).
- b. A history of Guillain-Barré Syndrome within six weeks following a previous dose of influenza vaccine is considered to be a precaution for use of influenza vaccines by the CDC. Documentation is required from a licensed healthcare provider.
- c. Additional contraindications may exist if the live attenuated influenza vaccination (LAIV) is offered. Medical contraindications against LAIV include:
 - Adults 50 years of age or older
 - Pregnant woman
 - Persons with asthma
 - Adults who have immunosuppression (including immunosuppression caused by HIV or medications)
 - Adults and children who have chronic pulmonary, cardiovascular (except isolated hypertension), renal, hepatic, neurologic/neuromuscular, hematologic or metabolic disorders
- d. If a person has a contraindication, but still desires to get the influenza vaccine, they should discuss it with their primary healthcare provider. If the primary healthcare provider administers the influenza vaccination, the staff member must provide documentation of vaccination to _____ that includes the date, type of vaccination and provider signature.

VI. VERIFICATION OF CONTRAINDICATIONS and MASK USE:

- a. For declination based on medical contraindication, the Declination of Influenza Vaccination for Medical Contraindications form must be completed and signed by a Colorado licensed nurse practitioner, physician or physician assistant. This document will then be reviewed and verified by, _____ with follow up as needed to the licensed healthcare provider.
- b. Upon verification of contraindications, all persons with approved contraindications to vaccination will be required to provide signed written documentation which states that he/she will wear a mask at all times during the scheduled shift. Healthcare personnel are not required to wear the mask during scheduled breaks. These breaks must occur in designated break areas.
- c. Names of persons required to wear masks will be provided to the worker's supervisors and managers, including department leadership.

VII. CONSEQUENCES FOR NON-COMPLIANCE:

- a. Healthcare personnel without documentation of vaccination or valid declination by October 21st will be considered noncompliant with annual influenza vaccination requirements.
- b. If vaccination has not occurred by October 21st, healthcare personnel will receive a written warning from their supervisor that they are not in compliance with the _____ influenza vaccination policy.
- c. Healthcare personnel will then have 5 days to be in compliance (either through vaccination or proof of valid medical contraindication).
- d. If healthcare personnel is not in compliance within 5 days of the written warning issuance, the worker will be suspended for 3 days without pay. After the three day suspension, if the worker is still not in compliance, the healthcare personnel will be terminated. If the healthcare personnel is a physician, medical staff privileges will be revoked from _____
- e. If persons who have a documented medical declination are not in compliance with wearing a mask at all times during the schedule shift with the exception of during scheduled breaks in designated break room areas, the worker will receive written warning from their supervisor that they are not in compliance with the _____ influenza vaccination policy.
- f. On a second offense, the healthcare personnel's supervisor will continue the disciplinary process, up to and including termination.

VIII. CONTINGENCY PLAN:

- a. If there is a shortage of influenza vaccine supply that affects the supply of influenza vaccine for _____ staff use, Administration will develop a contingency plan. This plan will include vaccine prioritization and distribution based on the influenza vaccine supply shortage faced and recommendations from the CDC and the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment.
- b. Communication about mask use and compliance with the influenza vaccination plan will be sent to healthcare personnel in the event of an influenza vaccine shortage or delay.

RELATED DOCUMENTS / REFERENCES

- a. ACIP Provisional Recommendations for the Use of Influenza Vaccine: Date of ACIP vote: February 24, 2010 Date of posting of provisional recommendations: March 2, 2010 Accessed at:
http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/rr59e0729a1.htm?s_cid=rr59e0729a1_w
- b. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). Prevention and Control of Seasonal influenza with Vaccines. Recommendations of the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) 2010. August 6, 2010; 59 (rr08); 1-62.
<http://www.cdc.gov/media/pressrel/2010/r100224.htm>
- c. APIC, Association of Professionals in Infection Control (APIC) Position Paper: Influenza Immunization of Healthcare Personnel.
- d. State of Colorado regulations regarding vaccination of healthcare workers: Chapter II, Part 10 – Influenza Immunization of Healthcare Workers
<http://www.colorado.gov/cs/Satellite?c=Page&childpagename=CDPHE-Main%2FCBONLayout&cid=1251607568722&pagename=CBONWrapper>