



DEPARTMENT OF
HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

Promoting and protecting health, well-being, self-sufficiency, and safety of all in Marin County.



September 14, 2015

TO: Marin County Hospitals, Clinics, Medical Offices, Skilled Nursing Facilities and other Long-Term Care Facilities, Hospice, Home Health Agencies, Emergency Medical Services (EMS), and other Health Facilities

Grant Nash Colfax, MD
DIRECTOR

RE: Mandatory Influenza Vaccination of All Health Care Workers

Matthew Willis, MD, MPH
PUBLIC HEALTH OFFICER

Lisa M. Santora, MD, MPH
DEPUTY PUBLIC HEALTH OFFICER

As leaders in health care, I know we share common goals: to minimize the spread of communicable disease, provide outstanding health care for our community, and keep our health care workers healthy. Vaccination of health care workers against influenza reduces infection and absenteeism, prevents patient mortality, and results in financial savings to our communities and the health care system. Mandated vaccination of health care workers is shown to increase vaccination rates to above 95%, higher than rates achieved in the absence of such a mandate.

3240 Kerner Boulevard
San Rafael, CA 94901
415 473 4163 T
415 473 2326 F
415 473 3232 TTY
www.marincounty.org/hhs

State law requires that general acute care hospitals and certain other health care facilities offer influenza vaccination to employees and, for those employees who decline vaccination, maintain a record of the signed declination form. (CA Code of Regulations §5199 Aerosol Transmissible Diseases standard of Cal OSHA, effective September 1, 2010). For the 2015-6 flu season, I am issuing a Health Officer order that expands last year's order requiring influenza vaccination or masking of health care workers at all of Marin's acute care hospitals and licensed health care facilities to include all pre-hospital Emergency Medical Services (EMS) personnel who engage in or are licensed to engage in patient care. By providing vaccinations to personnel, EMS agencies promote employee health and protect patients.

Order:

All health care facilities and EMS providers in Marin County must implement a program requiring their health care workers to receive an annual influenza vaccination or, if they decline, to wear a mask for the duration of the influenza season while working in patient care areas in that health care facility.

Duration:

This order is ongoing and applies to each future influenza season unless modified, suspended, or rescinded. Influenza season is defined as November 1 to March 31 of the following year. If influenza surveillance demonstrates unusually early and/or late peaks, the period during which the masking requirement shall apply for that season may be extended.

Facilities Subject to the Order:

This order applies to all health care facilities and EMS providers, including but not limited to, hospitals, skilled nursing and other long-term care facilities, outpatient medical clinics, hospice, home health agencies, and facilities as defined in the California Health & Safety Code Sections 1200-1209 and 1250-1264 (http://www.leginfo.ca.gov/html/hsc_table_of_contents.html).

Definition of Health Care Worker:

For the purposes of this order, "health care workers" or "HCWs" are persons, paid or unpaid, working in health care settings who have potential for exposure to patients, infectious materials or contaminated surfaces.

Institutions nationwide and in California have been recognized by the Influenza Vaccination Honor Roll as champions by taking the lead in mandating influenza vaccination and implementing serious transmission prevention measures within their organization or institution. For more information please visit <http://www.immunize.org/honor-roll/>.

At the end of this year's flu season, we will conduct a survey of select facilities to gather information on success of implementing this new requirement. This report may include the total number of your staff, the number vaccinated against influenza, and the number of unvaccinated individuals for whom mandatory masking was implemented.

Together, we can minimize harmful and costly impacts of influenza on our patients, co-workers, families, and communities. For any additional questions, please contact Linda Ferguson, Supervising Public Health Nurse at (415) 473-3038, or Danielle Hiser, Immunization Coordinator at (415) 473-3078.

Thank you for your role in keeping Marin County the healthiest county in California.

Sincerely,



Matthew Willis, MD, MPH
Marin County Health Officer