



CITY OF LONG BEACH

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

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September 4, 2018

TO: Licensed Acute Care Hospitals, Skilled Nursing Facilities, Long-Term Care Facilities, and Intermediate Care Facilities

FROM: Anissa Davis, M.D., M.P.H., Health Officer, City of Long Beach

SUBJECT: Health Officer Order for Mandatory Influenza Vaccination or Masking of Healthcare Personnel (HCP) under Authority of the California Health and Safety Code Section 120175 and 1288.7(a)

To lower the risk of influenza transmission to patients in healthcare settings, Long Beach licensed health care facilities must annually offer free influenza vaccinations on-site to their employees and require all health care personnel (HCP) to be vaccinated. Health care personnel is defined as a person, paid or unpaid, working in a healthcare setting who has direct patient contact or works in any patient care area. Any HCP who elects not to be vaccinated must wear a mask when they are working in patient-care areas or have contact with patients during influenza season. The Order is identical to previous years except that it has been updated to extend Influenza season from November 1 to April 30 of each year.

The mandatory vaccination and masking policies aim to reduce employee absenteeism during influenza season and reduce transmission of influenza from HCP to patients. Influenza vaccination will lead to decreased illness among personnel, decreased staff absenteeism, and decreased morbidity and mortality among patients.

- Studies suggest that up to 25% of healthcare personnel are infected with influenza each season.
- Healthcare personnel are more likely to work when ill than other professions, which increases the risk for flu transmission in healthcare facilities.
- As many as 1 in 2 infected people never show classic flu symptoms, but can shed virus for 5-10 days. Thus, asymptomatic personnel can spread influenza unknowingly.
- Patient admissions and healthcare personnel absenteeism are typically higher during the flu season, which increases the impact of flu-related absenteeism on operations of these health care facilities.
- Influenza infections acquired in healthcare settings lead to increased hospital days and mortality for inpatients

By law, acute care hospitals in California must annually offer free influenza vaccinations on-site to their employees and require all to be vaccinated; any employee who elects not to be vaccinated must provide the hospital with a written declaration that he or she has declined the vaccination [Cal. Health & Safety Code §1288.7(a)]. In addition, occupational safety regulations mandate that many types of health care facilities, including hospitals, skilled nursing facilities, and long-term health care facilities make seasonal influenza vaccine reasonably available to all employees with occupational exposure and ensure that each employee who refuses the vaccine signs a statement declining vaccination [8 Cal. Code Regs. §5199 (c)(6)(D) & (h)(10)].

To ensure compliance and to gain a better understanding of implementation processes, the Long Beach Department of Health and Human Services requests that all hospitals maintain the following records:

- Influenza vaccination status for HCP including employees, licensed care practitioners, contractors, students, and volunteers
- Declination forms for influenza vaccinations
- List of healthcare associated influenza infections (onset > 72 hours after admission). We will provide more information on how to report these cases later in the season.

Thank you in advance for complying with our request. These data play a key role in our ability to assess our joint efforts to improve influenza prevention among high risk populations in healthcare facilities.

ORDER: Pursuant to my authority under §120175 of the California Health and Safety Code, I hereby order every licensed acute care hospital, skilled nursing facility, and intermediate care facility within the City of Long Beach to implement a program under which healthcare personnel at such facility receive an annual influenza vaccination for the current season or wear a mask for the duration of the influenza season while in contact with patients or working in patient-care areas.

PERSONS COVERED: For the purposes of this Order, “health care personnel” are all persons, including paid and unpaid employees, contractors, students, and volunteers, who work in areas where patient care is provided in a licensed facility subject to this Order or who otherwise have direct contact with patients at such a facility.

DURATION OF ORDER: Until it is rescinded, this Order applies to each influenza season, defined as November 1 of one year to April 30 of the following year. If surveillance data in a particular year demonstrates that the influenza season is different than November 1 to April 30, this period may be changed by a further order.

We appreciate your help and support protecting the residents of our community. If you have any questions, please visit www.longbeach.gov/fluforproviders or contact the Long Beach Department of Health and Human Services Epidemiology Program at (562) 570-4302.