

# HEALTH OFFICER ORDER INFLUENZA FAQ

## for Healthcare Personnel

### DID YOU KNOW?

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP), and the Healthcare Infection Control Practices Advisory Committee (HICPAC) recommend that all healthcare personnel (HCP), including Emergency Medical Services (EMS) providers get immunized annually against influenza (flu).

### WHAT DOES THE RESEARCH INDICATE?

- Influenza outbreaks in hospitals and long-term care facilities have been attributed to low influenza vaccination coverage among healthcare personnel in these facilities.
- Higher vaccination levels among healthcare personnel have been associated with a lower risk of healthcare-associated influenza cases by both patients and personnel.
- Vaccinating healthcare personnel can reduce transmission of influenza, staff illness and absenteeism, and influenza-related illness and death.

### WHAT ARE SOME INFLUENZA FACTS?

- Influenza is a contagious respiratory illness caused by influenza viruses that infect the nose, throat, and lungs. It can cause mild to severe illness and potentially lead to death.
- The best way to prevent the flu is getting vaccinated every year.
- Flu is mainly spread to others by droplets that are made when people with the flu talk, sneeze, or cough. Droplets enter the mouths and noses of those who are close by.
- The flu can spread between persons as far as about 6 feet away. Less often, a person may get the flu by touching a surface or an object that has flu virus on it and then touching his or her nose or mouth.
- People can pass the flu to another person before they are aware that they are sick. Healthy adults can infect people 1 day before they have flu symptoms through 5 to 7 days after becoming ill.

### WHY DO HCP VACCINATION MATTER?

- By getting vaccinated, HCP protect themselves and their patients.
- Yearly vaccination is important, since flu virus strains are constantly changing. A flu vaccination from a previous season will not fully protect HCP against the current season's flu viruses.
- High rates of vaccination among HCP are associated with improved patient outcomes and fewer cases of influenza among other staff members.
- HCP can spread influenza to patients. According to a study conducted among nursing personnel and physicians in California, 36% of HCP developed influenza-like illness during the influenza season and 77% of them cared for patients while sick.
- Both hospitalization rates and healthcare personnel absenteeism are typically higher during the flu season, which increases the impact of flu-related absenteeism on hospital operations.

### WHAT ARE THE HCP VACCINATION COVERAGE LEVELS?

- During the 2010-11 influenza season, an estimated 64% of healthcare personnel in the U.S. were vaccinated against the flu. Overall, 80% of healthcare personnel in the U.S. reported being vaccinated against influenza in the 2021-2022 influenza season.
- During the 2020-2021 influenza season, influenza vaccination coverage was highest among healthcare personnel who were required by their employer to be vaccinated, with 97% coverage.
- Evaluation data indicate that the implementation of the Los Angeles County and Long Beach Health Officers' Orders increased HCP influenza immunization rates in acute care facilities across Los Angeles County from 60% in the influenza season prior to the 2012-2013 Order to 86% in 2020. In Long Beach this past 2022-2023 influenza season, the average rate of hospital-based HCP immunization was 66%.