

Office of Origin: **Occupational Health Services**

I. PURPOSE

Influenza (the flu) is a contagious respiratory illness caused by [influenza viruses](#). It can cause mild to severe illness, and at times can lead to death. The most effective way to prevent infection from an influenza virus is through annual flu vaccination. Annual influenza vaccination protects our staff, our patients, and the integrity of the UCSF workforce. This policy is intended to maximize vaccination against influenza among all UCSF personnel, especially those whose work requires their presence in clinical settings at UCSF Medical Center and UCSF Benioff Children's Hospital (collectively known as UCSF Medical Center) or related clinical areas.

II. REFERENCES

California Health and Safety Code Section 1288.5

Joint Commission Standard IC.02.04.01 – Annual Influenza Vaccination Program

Order, 9/7/2016, Health Officer Order: Mandatory Influenza Vaccination or Masking of Health Care Workers During Every Influenza Season, City and County of San Francisco, Department of Public Health (See [Appendix A](#))

[Administrative Policy 4.07.01 Staff Communicable Disease Surveillance](#)

III. DEFINITIONS

STAFF: All UCSF Medical Center employees, faculty, temporary workers, trainees, volunteers, students, and vendors, regardless of employer. This includes staff who provide services to or work in UCSF Medical Center patient care or clinical areas

PATIENT CARE OR CLINICAL AREA includes the physical or recognized borders of inpatient and outpatient areas where patients are seen, evaluated, treated, or wait to be seen. Examples of non-clinical staff who provide services in clinical areas include, but are not limited to:

- Hospitality Services
- Facilities Management
- Food and Nutrition Services personnel who enter patient care areas
- Sterile Processing and Material Services technicians who deliver equipment to patient care areas
- Patient transporters
- Campus research personnel who enter patient care areas

IV. POLICY

- A. As a condition of employment, and in accordance with California law, UCSF Medical Center requires staff (see Definitions) to have annual influenza vaccination or complete a statement acknowledging the offer of the vaccination, declining the vaccination, and providing a reason for the declination. To protect the integrity of the workforce and for patient safety, declinations are strongly discouraged by any staff, especially those with duties or presence in patient care areas (see Definitions).

Annually, staff must do one of the following:

1. Receive the influenza vaccine(s) provided free of charge by UCSF through UCSF Occupational Health Services (OHS) to anyone with a UCSF badge.
2. Provide current written proof of receipt of required influenza vaccine(s) if not given at UCSF.
3. Complete the declination statement and wear a hospital-supplied paper (exam) mask over the mouth and nose at all times when in patient care or clinical areas (see Definitions), for the duration of the influenza season.

This policy applies to all influenza vaccines recommended by the San Francisco Department of Public Health (SFDPH), and may include vaccines recommended by California Department of Public Health (CDPH), the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), regulatory, accreditation or legislative bodies.

- B. Annually, the organization will develop, implement, and evaluate a program to require annual influenza vaccination or declination for UCSF staff. Other individuals may be offered vaccinations as determined by the organization. The exact timing of notification and vaccination will be based upon public health recommendations and the availability of the vaccine from suppliers. The program will have the following features:

1. Prior to the annual onset of flu season, and when additional vaccination recommendations are published by SFDPH, the UCSF Medical Center will inform staff about the following:
 - a. Requirement(s) for vaccination
 - b. Dates when influenza vaccine(s) are available
 - c. Vaccine(s) will be provided at no cost to them
 - d. Procedure for receiving vaccination
 - e. Procedure for submitting written documentation of vaccine obtained outside UCSF
 - f. Procedure for declining
 - g. Consequences of refusing vaccination

2. Staff who decline the influenza vaccination (even for religious or medically justifiable reasons) will sign (electronically or written) documentation that he/she will wear a mask at all times while in any UCSF patient care areas (see Definitions) for the duration of the influenza season. A system for identifying staff that have or have not been vaccinated will be established.
3. Compliance with annual mandatory influenza vaccination or declination will be required for the duration of influenza season defined by the Health Officer of the Department of Public Health, City and County of San Francisco or by the Chief Medical officer in consultation with the Infection Control Officer(s) and the Medical Director of Occupational Health Services.. Staff and students who fail to comply with this policy may be taken off work status and may be subject to applicable corrective action policies and procedures.
4. Listed below are the four justified reasons for declining influenza vaccine. Staff may decline for other reasons but are strongly encouraged to be vaccinated if one of these four are not present.
 - a. Severe allergies to eggs, vaccine components, or prior influenza vaccines.
 - b. History of Guillain-Barre Syndrome.
 - c. Declaration of another medical contraindication. Pregnancy is a high-risk condition for influenza illness and does not constitute an exception.
 - d. Declaration of a qualifying religious contraindication to vaccination.
5. The duration of influenza season is defined as December 15 to March 31 of the following year. In any given year, the period may be extended as per the order of the Department of Public Health, City and County of San Francisco. or by the Chief Medical officer in consultation with the Infection Control Officer(s) and the Medical Director of Occupational Health Services.
6. If any staff has a medically justifiable reason to decline but requests the influenza vaccine, he/she will be directed to discuss the matter with their his/her medical provider and have it administered by his/her medical provider.
7. The organization will continue to use strategies for convenient vaccine access during all work shifts. Examples of strategies include: vaccination outreach clinics, training RNs on units and in clinics to give flu shots, use of the discharge lounge clinical staff, and modeling and support by institutional leaders.
8. Staff will be educated on the following:
 - a. Benefits of influenza vaccination

- b. Potential health consequences of influenza illness for themselves and patients
- c. Epidemiology and modes of transmission, diagnosis, and non-vaccine infection control strategies (such as the use of appropriate precautions & respiratory hygiene/cough etiquette), according to their level of responsibility in preventing healthcare associated influenza
- d. Safety profile of the influenza vaccine

Annually, the organization will evaluate vaccination rates of staff, will document and report on the reasons for declination of vaccine, and will report the number of and reason for exceptions.

V. RESPONSIBILITY

Direct questions about this policy to Occupational Health Services.

VI. APPENDIX

[Appendix A: Health Officer Order: Mandatory Influenza Vaccination or Masking of Health Care Workers During Every Influenza Season](#)

VII. HISTORY OF POLICY

Reviewed September 2009 by Senior Leadership Council

Approved September 2009 by Executive Medical Board and Chancellor Susan Desmond-Hellmann.

Reviewed September 2012 by the Occupational Health/Infection Control Executive Committee

Reviewed and approved November 2012 by the Policy Steering Committee

Reviewed and revised (with non-substantive edits) June 2014 Erin Andersen, RN, NP, UCSF Occupational Health

Reviewed and approved June 2014 Jennifer Hermann, Executive Director of Human Resources on behalf of the Policy Steering Committee

Reviewed and revised (with non-substantive edits) April 2017 by Patricia Bertlow, Occupational Health Services Administrative Director

Reviewed and approved June 2017 by Jeffrey Chiu, Vice President of Human Resources on behalf of the Policy Steering Committee

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**Appendix A: Health Officer Order: Mandatory Influenza Vaccination or
Masking of Health Care Workers during Every Influenza Season**



Edwin M Lee
Mayor

San Francisco Department of Public Health
Barbara A Garcia, MPA
Director of Health
Tomás J. Aragón, MD, DrPH
Health Officer

MEMORANDUM

DATE: 2016-9-7

TO: Hospitals, Skilled Nursing, and other Long Term Care Facilities in San Francisco
All Other Licensed Health Care Facilities in San Francisco

FROM: Tomás J. Aragón, MD, DrPH *Tomás Aragón*
Health Officer

SUBJECT: Health Officer Order: Mandatory Influenza Vaccination or Masking of Health
Care Workers during Every Influenza Season

As in previous years, I am issuing a Health Officer order mandating that all hospitals, skilled nursing, and other long term care facilities in the City and County of San Francisco require their health care workers (HCWs) to receive an annual influenza vaccination or, if they decline, to wear a mask in patient care areas during the influenza season. For other clinical facilities, we strongly recommend implementation of a similar vaccination or masking policy.

Note that, for the 2017-18 influenza season and in subsequent years, our department plans to define the influenza season as November 1st-April 30th with possible modification based on local epidemiology.

As leaders in health care, I know we share common goals: to minimize the spread of communicable diseases, provide outstanding healthcare for our community, and keep our workers healthy. Influenza infection affects 5 to 20 percent of the US population every year, leading to an estimated 3.1 million days of hospitalization and 31.4 million outpatient visits.¹ HCWs are both at risk for influenza and can transmit the virus to their patients and coworkers. Patients in our health care facilities, especially young children, pregnant women, the elderly, and those with chronic health conditions, are at greater risk for influenza-related hospitalization and death.

Vaccination of health care workers against influenza reduces infection and absenteeism, prevents patient morbidity and mortality, and results in financial savings to our communities and the health care system. Healthy People 2020 objectives target a 90 percent seasonal influenza vaccination rate for all health care personnel.² Comprehensive mandatory vaccination programs that include masking for unvaccinated health care workers have been associated with health care worker vaccination rates above 95%.³

State law provides that hospitals, skilled nursing facilities, long-term care facilities, and certain other health care facilities must offer influenza vaccination annually to employees, and for those

employees that decline such vaccination, maintain a record of the signed declination form.⁴ This order enhances patient protection by requiring unvaccinated health care workers to wear a face mask in patient care areas during the influenza season.

Order

I, as the Health Officer of the City and County of San Francisco, am requiring that each and every hospital, skilled nursing, and long term care facility in San Francisco implement a program requiring its 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.

Duration of Order

This order is ongoing and applies to each influenza season unless the order is rescinded. This year, the influenza season is defined as December 15, 2016 to March 31, 2017. **In subsequent years the influenza season will be defined as November 1st through April 30.** In any given year, if influenza surveillance data demonstrate unusually early and/or late peaks, I may extend the period during which the masking program shall apply for that season.

Facilities Subject to the Order

For the 2016-17 influenza season, this order applies to hospitals, skilled nursing, and other long term care facilities. **For other clinical facilities, we strongly recommend implementation of a similar policy.**

Definition of HCWs

For the purposes of this order, "health care workers" or "HCW" are persons, paid and unpaid, full-time or part-time, employees or contractors, working in the licensed health care facility, who have direct patient contact or who work in patient care areas.

I appreciate your help and support in protecting the residents of the City and County of San Francisco. For any additional questions, please contact the SFDPH Immunization Program at 415-554-2955.

cc: Barbara A. Garcia, MPA, Director of Health
Aleeta Van Runkle, City Attorney

¹ Molinari, NM, et al. (2007). The annual impact of seasonal influenza in the US: measuring disease burden and costs. *Vaccine*, 25, 5086-5096.

² See https://www.healthypeople.gov/node/6361/data_details

³ Rakita, RM, et al. (2010). Mandatory influenza vaccination of health care workers: a 5-year study. *Infection Control and Hospital Epidemiology*, 31, 881-888.

⁴ CA Code of Regulations §5199: Aerosol Transmissible Diseases Standard of Cal OSHA, effective September 1, 2010.