



Public Health Department

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Health Advisory

To: Healthcare Providers

From: Robert Bernstein, M.D. (signed original on file)

Date: September 22, 2020

Re: Health Officer Order
Mandatory Influenza Vaccination of Healthcare Workers in Butte County

Order

I, as the Public Health Officer of Butte County, am requiring Butte County healthcare workers to receive an annual influenza vaccination by November 1st, or if they decline, to wear a mask for the duration of the influenza season when working in patient care areas.

Justification

For the upcoming influenza season, influenza vaccination will be paramount to reduce the impact of respiratory illnesses in the population and resulting burdens on the healthcare system during the COVID-19 pandemic.

In your role as healthcare professionals and mine as Public Health Officer, we share a common goal of minimizing the spread of influenza. Each year in the United States, more than 200,000 hospitalizations and up to 49,000 deaths are associated with the influenza virus. Rates of serious illness and death are highest among children younger than 2 years of age, seniors 65 years and older, and people of any age with medical conditions that place them at increased risk of having complications from influenza.

Health care associated influenza is a common and serious problem, contributing significantly to patient morbidity and mortality. Influenza can be transmitted before the affected individual shows symptoms of the disease. In some cases a person may contract and transmit the infection without ever showing signs of influenza. Vaccination is the most effective way to prevent influenza, so the vaccine is universally recommended by the American Academy of Pediatrics, Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and the American Academy of Family Physicians for everyone 6 months old and older.

Influenza vaccination of healthcare workers both protects the individuals who receive it and creates a safer environment for patients who may have a greater risk of complications from influenza than the general population.

Duration of Order

This order takes effect each year during the influenza season and will remain in effect every following influenza season unless otherwise modified, suspended, or rescinded by the Butte County Health Officer. For the purposes of this order, influenza season is defined as **November 1st to April 30th** the following year; however, this time period may be expanded based upon the timing and strains of circulating influenza.

Facilities Subject to the Order

This order applies to licensed healthcare facilities. For other clinical facilities, I strongly recommend implementation of a similar policy.

Definition of Healthcare Workers

For the purposes of this order, I will use the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) definition of healthcare workers, which are defined as all paid and unpaid persons working in health-care settings who have the potential for exposure to patients and/or to infectious materials, including body substances, contaminated medical supplies and equipment, contaminated environmental surfaces, or contaminated air.

Definition of Mask

For the purposes of this vaccinate or mask order, a surgical mask is sufficient, as it can effectively block droplet spray from the wearer. Impacted staff should also be trained on how to properly don and doff their masks as well as when to change/discard them.

If you have further questions, please contact the Butte County Public Health's Communicable Disease Program staff at (530) 552-3929.

Categories of urgency levels:

Health Alert: conveys the highest level of importance; warrants immediate action or attention

Health Advisory: provides important information for a specific incident or situation; may not require immediate action

Health Update: provides updated information regarding an incident or situation; unlikely to require immediate action