



## **PROVIDER HEALTH ADVISORY**

**October 6, 2021**

### **Mandatory Influenza Vaccination of Health Care Workers in San Luis Obispo County**

Each year, San Luis Obispo County suffers illness and death from influenza, especially among our most vulnerable populations: infants and small children, the elderly, and those with chronic illness. Thousands of young, otherwise healthy people die from flu each year in the US. Influenza also strains our health care system, a particular concern during the pandemic. While influenza case numbers were quite low last year, predictions for this year indicate possible high rates of influenza.

Health care workers (HCWs) are both at risk for influenza and can transmit the infection to their colleagues and vulnerable patients. Vaccination of HCWs reduces infection and absenteeism in the workforce and may prevent mortality due to reduced transmission to patients.

The best way to attain our shared goal of preventing transmission of influenza, particularly in health care settings, is to mandate vaccination or masking of HCWs each flu season.

#### **Order:**

Pursuant to Health Officer authority (CA Health & Safety Code §120175), I hereby order all health care facilities/organizations to adopt and implement a policy to require that all HCWs receive the annual influenza vaccine OR sign a written declination and wear a respirator while on duty during flu season.

#### *Duration of Order*

Unless and until rescinded, this Order applies during each influenza season, defined as November 1 to April 30 of the following year. If surveillance data in a particular year demonstrate that the flu season is different from these dates, this time period may be amended by a further order.

#### *Facilities/Organizations Subject to Order*

This Order applies to San Luis Obispo County hospitals, community clinics, physician offices, ambulatory care centers, long-term care facilities and emergency medical services providers.

#### *Definition of HCWs*

For this requirement, "health care workers" or "HCWs" are people, paid or unpaid, who work in indoor settings where (1) care is provided to patients, or (2) patients have access for any purpose.

I also recommend that health care administrators adopt an easy way to identify HCWs who have received their influenza vaccine. One example of this type of identification is to place a sticker on the health care worker's badge following vaccination. Thank you for your hard work in making San Luis Obispo County a healthy community.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Penny Borenstein".

Penny Borenstein, MD, MPH  
San Luis Obispo County Health Officer

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