



COUNTY OF SAN LUIS OBISPO HEALTH AGENCY
PUBLIC HEALTH DEPARTMENT

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PROVIDER HEALTH ADVISORY

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

To San Luis Obispo County Pre-Hospital Emergency Medical Care Agencies:

Influenza season will begin in the fall. Flu season is from October 2018 to April 2019. Last year, San Luis Obispo County experienced very high rates of illness and death from influenza, especially among our most vulnerable populations—infants and small children, the elderly, and the immunocompromised. Thousands of young, otherwise healthy people also die from the flu each year in the United States.

Vaccination of health care workers reduces infection and absenteeism in the workforce, may prevent mortality due to reduced transmission to patients, and results in financial savings to sponsoring health institutions. The best way to prevent transmission of a disease like influenza to those persons we serve is to mandate vaccination of health care workers. Two relevant laws in California require health care facilities to make flu vaccine available to all employees (CA Health & Safety Code §1288.7 effective January 1, 2007; Aerosol Transmissible Diseases standard of Cal OSHA (Cal. Code Regulations § 5199), effective September 1, 2010). Employees who refuse vaccination must sign a written declination.

In accordance with the intent of these laws, and consistent with the powers of authority of the County Health Officer, I am urging employers to require of all unvaccinated health care workers, that, in addition to signing an influenza vaccine declination statement, a mask be worn while on duty during influenza season. Influenza vaccine should be received by the health care worker by November 1, 2018; after that time, a health care worker should have either received the vaccine or signed a declination and be wearing a mask.

I am also recommending that health care administrators adopt an easy way to identify the health care workers 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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