



## **PROVIDER HEALTH ADVISORY**

**September 30, 2020**

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

Each year, San Luis Obispo County suffers high rates of 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 also die from flu each year in the US.

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. In the midst of the ongoing pandemic, getting the flu vaccine is more important than ever.

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 mask while on duty during the 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Unless and until rescinded, this Order applies during each influenza season, defined as November 1 to April 30 of the following year.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 purposes of this requirement, “health care workers” or “HCWs” are people, paid or unpaid, who have direct patient contact or work in patient care areas of licensed health care settings.

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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