COUNTY OF MARIN

DEPARTMENT OF
HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES
Promoting and protecting health, well-being, self-sufficiency, and safety of all in Marin County.

MARIN HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES
Health, Well-being & Safety

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August 29, 2014

TO: Marin County Hospitals, Clinics, Medical Offices, Skilled Nursing Facilities and other Long-Term Care Facilities, Hospice, Home Health Agencies, and other Licensed Health Facilities

RE: Mandatory Influenza Vaccination of All Health Care Workers

As leaders in health care, I know we share common goals: to minimize the spread of communicable disease, provide outstanding health care for our community, and keep our health care workers healthy. Vaccination of health care workers against influenza reduces infection and absenteeism, prevents patient mortality, and results in financial savings to our communities and the health care system.

State law requires that general acute care hospitals and certain other health care facilities offer influenza vaccination to employees and, for those employees who decline vaccination, maintain a record of the signed declination form. (CA Code of Regulations §5199 Aerosol Transmissible Diseases standard of Cal OSHA, effective September 1, 2010). Mandated vaccination of health care workers is shown to increase vaccination rates to above 95%, higher than rates achieved in the absence of such a mandate.

For the 2012-13 flu season I strongly recommended employers of health care facilities vaccinate all health care workers for influenza and require those who declined to wear a mask in patient care areas. For the 2013-14 flu season, I issued Health Officer orders requiring influenza vaccination or masking for all of Marin's acute care hospitals, and announced the plan to phase-in other health care settings this year.

Order:
All licensed health care facilities in Marin County must implement a program requiring their 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 in that health care facility.

Duration:
This order is ongoing and applies to each future influenza season unless modified, suspended, or rescinded. Influenza season is defined as November 1 to March 31 of the following year. If influenza surveillance demonstrates unusually early and/or late peaks, the period during which the masking requirement shall apply for that season may be extended.

Facilities subject to the Order:

This order applies to all licensed health facilities, including but not limited to, hospitals, skilled nursing and other long-term care facilities, outpatient medical clinics, hospice, and home health agencies. For more information and definitions of licensed health care facilities, see California Health & Safety Code Sections 1200-1209 and 1250-1264. http://www.leginfo.ca.gov/.html/hsc_table_of_contents.html

Definition of Health Care Worker:
For the purposes of this order, "health care workers" or "HCWs" are persons, paid or unpaid, working in health care settings who have potential for exposure to patients, infectious materials or contaminated surfaces.

Institutions nationwide and in California have been recognized by the Influenza Vaccination Honor Roll as champions by taking the lead in mandating influenza vaccination and implementing serious transmission prevention measures within their organization or institution. For more information please visit http://www.immunize.org/honor-roll/.

Together, we can minimize harmful and costly impacts of influenza on our patients, co-workers, families, and communities. For any additional questions, please contact Linda Ferguson, Supervising Public Health Nurse at (415) 473-3038, or Danielle Hiser, Immunization Coordinator at (415) 473-3078.

Thank you for your role in keeping Marin County the healthiest county in California.

Sincerely,

Matthew Willis, MD, MPH
Marin County Health Officer