



SAN LUIS OBISPO COUNTY HEALTH AGENCY

Public Health Department

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TO: San Luis Obispo County Hospital CEOs, Physicians, Medical Practices, Community Clinics, and Ambulatory Care Centers

RE: Mandatory Influenza Vaccination of All Healthcare Workers in San Luis Obispo County

Influenza season will begin in the fall. In your roles as leaders in healthcare, and mine as the County Health Officer, I know we share a common goal: to minimize the spread of communicable diseases like influenza, provide outstanding healthcare for our citizens, and keep our healthcare worker population healthy.

Vaccination of healthcare workers reduces infection and absenteeism among them, prevents mortality in their 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 healthcare workers and there are now two laws in California requiring healthcare facilities to make flu vaccine available to all their employees. Those employees who refuse the vaccination must sign a written declination statement (CA Health & Safety Code §1288.7 effective January 1, 2007, and Aerosol Transmissible Diseases standard of Cal OSHA, effective September 1, 2010 (8 Cal. Code Regulations § 5199).)

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 healthcare workers, that, in addition to signing an influenza vaccine declination statement, a mask be worn while on duty during influenza season. I am also recommending that healthcare administrators adopt an easy way to identify the healthcare workers who have received their influenza vaccine. One example of this type of concept is to place a sticker on the healthcare worker's badge following vaccination.

Many institutions nationwide and in California are going even further and making flu vaccine a condition of employment -only allowing exceptions to vaccination for those meeting any of the recognized specific medical contraindications or religious circumstances. For a list of other institutions, states, and federal mandates with this requirement, please see www.preventinfluenza.org.

We thank you for your assistance in working with San Luis Obispo County Health Department to make San Luis Obispo County a healthy community.

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