

Tuolumne County Public Health Department

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Robert S. Bernstein, MD, PhD, MPH, FACPM
Health Officer

Melissa Parrish, RN, PHN, MSW
Director of Public Health Nursing

Health Care Facility Administrators and Staff in Tuolumne County

Date: September 27, 2018

Re: *Health Officer Order for Influenza Vaccination or Masking
of All Health Care Workers (HCW) During Influenza Season*

Order:

Pursuant to Health Officer authority under California Health & Safety Code §120175, I hereby order all health care facilities in Tuolumne County to develop and implement a mandatory Influenza vaccination program for the 2018-2019 Influenza season. The program shall require all health care workers (HCWs) to provide evidence of Influenza vaccination. If a health care worker is unable to provide such evidence, that worker shall be required to wear a surgical mask while working in patient care areas during influenza season.

Background Information:

Influenza vaccination of HCWs is critical because it protects our community, protects a vital work force, and reduces employee absenteeism during Influenza season. Vaccination of HCWs is also a key component of public health preparedness. Importantly, the Influenza virus is contagious 24 hours before symptom onset, so a seemingly "healthy" person can infect others. The most vulnerable in our community (the elderly, children, pregnant women, and those with weakened immune systems) rely on health care providers and facilities to protect them from infectious disease. In consideration of this, this Health Officer Order is being issued.

Influenza vaccination can be obtained through multiple venues in our community. Call the Tuolumne County Health Department at 209-533-7401 for further information.

Definitions

For the purposes of this order, "health care workers (HCWs)" are defined as all persons (physicians, ancillary staff, support staff, and volunteers) working in licensed health care settings where patient care or other service is provided within about six feet of a patient. Unvaccinated HCWs who are infected with Influenza virus but not yet symptomatic, or who are in early stages of Influenza illness, can come in contact with highly vulnerable patients, unvaccinated visitors, or other unvaccinated HCWs while in the facility.

Licensed health care settings and categories of HCWs are defined in California Health and Safety code sections §1200-1209 and §1250-1264. Facilities that solely provide psychiatric, mental health or chemical dependency treatment services are exempt from the mandatory vaccination requirement. Dental offices are included as licensed health care settings, and Dentists usually wear surgical masks as a routine infection prevention and control measure when performing dental services. So, although this order is not directed at unvaccinated Dentists, all Dentists are strongly advised to get vaccinated against Influenza.

Under this order, a facility administrator may elect to expand the definition of "health care worker" so that it includes all persons working on facility properties and such an expanded definition is supported by the Health Officer.

For the purposes of this order, "Influenza vaccine" shall be defined as a vaccine approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration and recommended by the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices for the 2018-2019 Influenza season (see the attached sheet of frequently asked questions, FAQs).

For the purposes of this order, "Influenza season" is defined as November 1, 2018 to April 30, 2019. If Influenza surveillance data suggests that the Influenza season may end before or extend beyond April 30, 2019 then this order may be amended to shorten or extend the Influenza season definition.

Signed:



Robert S. Bernstein, MD, PhD, MPH
Health Officer
Tuolumne County Public Health Department

27 September '18

Date