



DEPARTMENT OF
HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

Promoting and protecting health, well-being, self-sufficiency, and safety of all in Marin County.

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TO: Marin County Hospitals, Physicians, Medical Practices, Community Clinics and Ambulatory Care Centers, Skilled Nursing Facilities, and other Long Term Care Facilities

FROM: Matthew Willis, MD, MPH
Marin County Public Health Officer

RE: Mandatory Influenza Vaccination of Healthcare Workers in Marin County Hospitals, Expanded to All Healthcare Facilities in 2014

In your role as leaders in healthcare and mine as the County Health Officer, I know we share common goals: to minimize the spread of communicable diseases like influenza, to provide outstanding healthcare for our community, and to keep our healthcare workers healthy. Influenza vaccination of healthcare workers reduces infection and absenteeism, prevents mortality in our patients, and results in financial savings to our health institutions.

There are now two laws in California requiring flu vaccine for healthcare workers and other personnel at hospitals (CA Health & Safety Code §1288.7 effective January 1, 2007 and §5199 Aerosol Transmissible Diseases standard of Cal OSHA, effective September 1, 2010). In addition to full adherence to these laws, I am requiring that all healthcare workers in licensed acute care hospitals in Marin County who have not been vaccinated during the 2013-2014 influenza season either receive the influenza vaccine or wear a mask while in the patient care area during the remainder of influenza season, through March 31, 2014. If local surveillance data demonstrate continued influenza activity after this date, this may be extended. Healthcare workers are all persons, paid or unpaid, working in healthcare settings who have direct patient contact or who work in patient care areas.

In 2014, for all hospitals, clinics and long term care facilities that have not yet already implemented institutional flu vaccine or mask policies by next fall, I plan to issue a Health Officer order requiring such for the 2014-15 flu season, effective November 1, 2014. This phase-in period will support active institutional policy development and implementation planning for each health facility's particular circumstances, starting now.

Many institutions in Marin County have already implemented this policy, and others nationwide and in California are going even further by making flu vaccine a condition of employment, excepting employees with 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 Marin County Department of Health and Human Services to protect the health of our community.

MW/lar