



COUNTY OF SAN LUIS OBISPO HEALTH AGENCY

PUBLIC HEALTH DEPARTMENT

Jeff Hamm *Health Agency Director*

Penny Borenstein, MD, MPH *Health Officer/Public Health Director*

August 21, 2017

TO: San Luis Obispo County Hospital CEOs, Community Clinics, Physician Offices, Ambulatory Care Centers, and Long-Term Care Facilities

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

Influenza season will begin in the fall. Flu season is from October 2017 to April 2018. Last year, San Luis Obispo County experienced very high rates of illness and death from influenza, especially among our most vulnerable populations—infants and small children, the elderly, and the immunocompromised. But thousands of young, otherwise healthy people also die from the flu each year in the United States.

Vaccination of healthcare workers reduces infection and absenteeism among them, may prevent mortality due to reduced transmission to 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. There are two relevant laws in California which require healthcare facilities to make flu vaccine available to all employees (CA Health & Safety Code §1288.7 effective January 1, 2007; Aerosol Transmissible Diseases standard of Cal OSHA (Cal. Code Regulations § 5199), effective September 1, 2010.) Employees who refuse vaccination must sign a written declination.

In accordance with the intent of these laws, and consistent with the powers of authority of the County Health Officer, I am requiring 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. This order is an update to our previous recommendation, is effective August 21, 2017, is ongoing, and applies to each influenza season unless the order is rescinded or modified. Influenza vaccine must be received by the healthcare worker by November 1, 2017; after that time, a healthcare worker must have either received the vaccine or signed a declination and be wearing a mask.

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.

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

Public Health Department

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