MAINEHEALTH INFLUENZA VACCINE POLICY
For Healthcare Personnel

PURPOSE

MaineHealth supports annual influenza vaccination for all eligible healthcare personnel (HCP) as part of its efforts in the prevention of transmission of influenza to patients, visitors and other staff. This position is consistent with the National and Maine Centers for Disease Control (CDC). Influenza vaccination of all HCPs is also endorsed by the Joint Commission, the Maine Hospital Association, the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP), the Infectious Diseases Society of America (IDSA), the National Foundation for Infectious Diseases (NFID) and the Society for Healthcare Epidemiology of America (SHEA).

POLICY

Healthcare Personnel (HCP): For purposes of this policy, HCP are defined as all employees, students, volunteers and medical staff (employed and non-employed providers) of MaineHealth member institutions. This applies to HCP working in the following settings: acute care hospitals, nursing homes, skilled nursing facilities, physician’s offices and outpatient clinics, urgent care centers and home healthcare. Healthcare personnel include direct care providers and those who perform non-direct patient care activities such as reception, administration, dietary, information service and housekeeping personnel.

All staff, volunteers, members of the medical staff, and students must either receive the annual influenza vaccine or complete a declination form before December 1 of each year. At the time of vaccination, HCPs will be given a sticker or other identifier to place on their identification badge to indicate they have received the flu vaccine. Vaccine will be offered on-site pending availability, typically on or before October 1.

Once the member institution’s identified expert (e.g., infection prevention department) identifies influenza in the local area, HCPs who have not received the flu vaccine will be required to wear a mask when within 6 feet of patients. Those HCP who do not have the approved identifier/sticker on their badge will be considered to have not received the vaccine. Managers and supervisors are responsible for enforcing masking requirements. HCP who do not follow masking requirements will receive corrective action as outlined in the member’s Corrective Action Policy.

Influenza Vaccination Goal: Ninety percent (90%) or more of all MaineHealth employees are vaccinated.

Other critical elements of the influenza program:

- Education of staff and licensed independent practitioners about influenza vaccination, non-vaccine control measures (such as hand hygiene, sneeze and cough etiquette), and the diagnosis, transmission, and potential impact of influenza.
- Annual monitoring of vaccination rates and reasons for nonparticipation in the organization’s immunization program.
- Implementation of enhancements to the program to increase participation.
RESPONSIBILITY:
It is the responsibility of:
- The employee/provider to abide by the procedures below.
- The manager to ensure compliance with the influenza policy.
- Employee Health Services (or designee) to manage the employee/provider influenza vaccine program. This includes scheduling clinics, providing consent and vaccine information forms, tabulating data regarding vaccination rates and informing department/unit managers of employee/provider participation.
- Infection Prevention staff to determine the appropriate time to initiate and discontinue increased preventive measures (i.e., increased hand gel/tissue stations, signage and mandatory masking).

PROCEDURES:
- **Vaccine offered free**: All MaineHealth employees will be offered influenza immunization at the worksite at no cost to them. Where funding and availability allows, non-employed HCP will be offered influenza immunization at no cost. Individuals hired between September 1 and the end of the influenza season will be provided influenza vaccine at the time of their post-offer physical exam, pending vaccine availability. Only influenza vaccine approved by the Federal Drug Administration (FDA) will be used.

- **Receipt of vaccine elsewhere**: HCP who receive the influenza vaccination elsewhere are required to provide documentation to Employee Health. Documentation must include HCP name, the name of vaccine, date provided and name of the vaccine provider along with the provider's signature. Only FDA approved influenza vaccine is acceptable.

- **Vaccine Sticker**: HCP will receive a sticker to place on their identification badges at the time of vaccination or upon presenting documentation of vaccination received elsewhere. This sticker is an indication that they have received the flu vaccine for the current influenza season.

- **Loss of sticker**: HCPs who lose the vaccine sticker during the influenza season can contact their employee health office to have a vaccine sticker reissued, upon confirmation of vaccination status.

- **Declination Statement**: HCP who opt out of immunization must complete a declination statement that identifies the reason for declining influenza immunization. At no time are HCP required to provide personal health information.

- **Masking Requirements**: HCPs who have not received the influenza vaccine are required to wear a mask when within 6 feet of patients in all patient care areas. This applies to all HCPs, clinical and non-clinical.

- **Non-Compliance**: HCP who are non-compliant should be educated regarding the influenza vaccine, methods to prevent influenza, and policy requirements. Staff who continue to be non-compliant with this policy after education and counseling will be subject to applicable Corrective Action Policy.

- **Adaptation of the Employee Influenza Vaccination Program for Special Circumstance**: The Infection Prevention department in consultation with Employee Health Services is authorized to enact changes to the employee influenza vaccination program to
accommodate special circumstances (e.g., vaccine shortage, novel influenza virus, pandemic illness). Such changes will be consistent with evidence based practice and state/national guidance.

REFERENCES


