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Health Advisory: Influenza Season and Health Care Workers (HCWs) Influenza Vaccination

Background:

As influenza season approaches, this is a reminder the Nevada County health officer order that licensed healthcare facilities in Nevada County mandate annual influenza vaccination of health care workers and have a plan for declinations (as health care workers can decline influenza vaccination) is still in effect. Please see the specific order below. Thank you for your role in keeping Nevada County one of the healthiest counties in California.

Each year, influenza infection affects 5-15% of the US population leading to approximately 200,000 hospitalizations and millions of outpatient visits. HCWs are at risk for influenza infection and can transmit the virus to their patients and co-workers. Historically, HCW vaccination levels against influenza have been low; mandatory vaccination policies have led to significant increases in vaccination levels, often over 90%. The goal of this mandatory influenza vaccination order for HCWs is to protect both patients and HCWs from influenza disease and thereby reduce influenza-related morbidity and mortality in Nevada County.

Order:

I, as the Health Officer of Nevada County, am requiring that healthcare facilities in Nevada County implement a program requiring their healthcare workers to receive an annual influenza vaccination. For those healthcare workers that decline, healthcare facilities must implement a plan to prevent onsite healthcare workers affiliated with the facility from contracting and transmitting the influenza virus to patients. Such a plan may include requiring workers to wear a mask for the duration of influenza season, reassigning work activities, or other action appropriate to the individual facility.

Duration of Order:

This order is ongoing and applies to each influenza season unless the order is rescinded. The influenza season is defined as *November 1 to April 30 of the following year*. Please note that the Conference of California Local Health Officers voted to standardize the implementation time frame with the understanding that the dates may be modified based on local epidemiology and state surveillance measures.

Facilities Subject to the Order:

This order applies to hospitals, ambulatory and community clinics, medical offices, EMS providers, skilled nursing and other long term care facilities, home health providers, pharmacies, dialysis centers, and any other licensed health care facility operating in Nevada County.

Definition of HCWs:

For the purposes of this order, "Health Care Worker" ("HCW") is defined as a person, paid or unpaid, working in a health care setting who has direct patient contact or works in any patient care area.

Reporting of influenza:

Please report *fatal cases of lab-confirmed influenza associated pediatric deaths in person 0-17 years of age*. The report can be faxed to Nevada County Communicable Disease at 530-271-0836. Call the Nevada County Communicable Disease nurse at 530-265-1420 if questions.

Please report outbreaks occurring among residents of group or institutional settings (long-term care, rehab, assisted living facilities) in Nevada County which are either lab-confirmed cases of influenza or outbreaks of undiagnosed influenza-like illness (ILI). During outbreak investigations, the health department may request specimens for confirmatory testing.

2019-2020 Influenza season vaccine and recommendations:

Please see the CDC recommendations for the 2019-2020 season. Routine annual influenza vaccination is recommended for all persons aged 6 months or older who do not have contraindications.

The CDC recommendations and guidance documents on vaccination, clinical evaluation, antiviral drugs, lab testing, and institutional outbreaks and infection control are found at:

<https://www.cdc.gov/flu/professionals/index.htm> and ACIP recommendations are at:

https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/volumes/68/rr/rr6803a1.htm?s_cid=rr6803a1_w