



The Commonwealth of Massachusetts
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Circular Letter: DHCQ 09-09-521

TO: Clinic Chief Executive Officers
Dialysis Center Chief Executive Officers
Hospital Chief Executive Officers
Long Term Care Facility Administrators

FROM: John Auerbach, Commissioner, Massachusetts Department of Public Health
Jean Pontikas, Interim Director, Bureau of Health Care Safety and Quality

DATE: September 14, 2009

**RE: GUIDELINES FOR THE VACCINATION OF EMPLOYEES OF LICENSED CLINICS,
DIALYSIS CENTERS, HOSPITALS AND LONG TERM CARE FACILITIES AGAINST
SEASONAL INFLUENZA AND PANDEMIC A H1N1 INFLUENZA**

Emergency regulations filed by the Department of Public Health (MDPH) on September 14, 2009 require licensed clinics, dialysis centers, hospitals and long-term care facilities to (1) offer their employees vaccination against seasonal influenza annually, and (2) authorize the Commissioner of Public Health to issue guidelines to require health care facilities to offer their employees vaccination against novel or pandemic viruses such as swine-origin influenza A H1N1. Facilities were initially alerted to these regulations in circular letters sent in late August (DHCQ 09-08-518, DHCQ 09-08-519, and DHCQ 09-08-520). The circular letters and regulations 105 CMR 130.000: Hospital Licensure; 105 CMR 140.000 Licensure of Clinics; and 105 CMR 150.000 Licensing of Long-Term Care Facilities are available on the DPH website at www.mass.gov/dph.

The attached guidelines ("guidelines") issued by the Commissioner are effective on September 14, 2009 and officially require health care facilities to offer their employees vaccination against pandemic swine-origin influenza A H1N1. The H1N1 vaccine is expected to be available starting in October 2009. The guidelines provide specific information about the mandated vaccination programs, the vaccines to be administered, the implementation schedule, and the required data collection and reporting for both seasonal influenza and H1N1, as well as links to the most current influenza and vaccination information. The guidelines are applicable from September 14, 2009 through June 30, 2010, unless subsequently amended or superseded.

A public hearing will be held on October 9, 2009 concerning the emergency regulations. Comments are invited either in person or in writing at the hearing; in addition, written testimony may be submitted until

October 16, 2009 at 5:00 p.m.. Please consult the DPH website at www.mass.gov/dph under “Regulations and Policies” for an announcement of the public hearing and comment period.

If you have any questions concerning the enclosed guidelines please contact the Bureau of Health Care Safety and Quality at DPH.DHCQ@massmail.state.ma.us