The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

Executive Office of Health and Human Services

Department of Public Health

Bureau of Health Care Safety and Quality

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**MEMORANDUM**

TO: Outpatient Dialysis Facility Administrators

FROM: Elizabeth Daake Kelley, MBA, MPH

Director, Bureau of Health Care Safety and Quality

DATE: December 20, 2022

RE: Guidance Regarding Seasonal Influenza Vaccination of Healthcare Personnel at Massachusetts Out-of-Hospital Dialysis Units for the 2022-2023 Influenza Season

The purpose of this memorandum is to remind Massachusetts Dialysis Facilities of the steps needed to fulfill the Massachusetts Department of Public Health (DPH) and Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) requirement for submitting healthcare personnel (HCP) influenza data to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s (CDC) National Healthcare Safety network (NHSN) by **May 15, 2023**.

This memorandum shall supersede all circular letters and memorandums for prior influenza seasons related to the reporting of seasonal influenza vaccination of healthcare personnel at dialysis facilities.

**Background**

As a condition of licensure[[1]](#footnote-1), DPH regulations require all licensed healthcare facilities to:

* Offer, free-of-charge, annual influenza vaccine to all personnel;
* Document receipt of influenza vaccine administered within and outside the facility or document the declination of immunization; and
* Report information to DPH, documenting compliance with the vaccination requirement, in accordance with these reporting and data collection guidelines.
  + Facilities may not unknown vaccine status.

DPH has established an overall minimum performance goal for all licensed facility HCP vaccination rates. Statewide, DPH expects that 90% or greater influenza vaccination coverage rate will be reached for all HCP. This performance goal is intended to advance patient and HCP health and safety by ensuring optimal HCP influenza vaccination coverage and is in alignment with the National Healthy People 2020 target of 90% influenza coverage of HCP.[[2]](#footnote-2) Additionally, the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) recommends that HCP receive an annual influenza vaccination to reduce influenza related morbidity and mortality among HCP and their patients as well as reduce absenteeism among HCP.[[3]](#footnote-3)

To protect the lives and welfare of patients, employees, and communities, as well as to improve quality and reduce healthcare costs, DPH encourages all healthcare facilities to implement an evidence-based influenza vaccination initiative to achieve the established goal of vaccinating at least 90% of eligible HCP. A key component of successful immunization programs includes senior leadership commitment and accountability for outcomes. Please see the Resources and Reference List aimed at assisting healthcare facilities to develop influenza campaigns and identify best practices for increasing HCP vaccination rates.

DPH will continue to reinforce the reporting requirement and statewide performance goal during trainings, and on-site visits in licensed healthcare facilities. Facility specific data is published annually and available to the public on the DPH website.

Please note that while the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) End Stage Renal Disease (ESRD) Program no longer requires submission of HCP influenza vaccination summary data through NHSN, reporting on these data is required to meet DPH annual reporting requirements.

Facility-specific operational guidance documents regarding HCP influenza vaccination summary data reporting are located at: <http://www.cdc.gov/nhsn/cms/index.html>

NHSN training materials are located at: <http://www.cdc.gov/nhsn/training/index.html>

Please forward this memorandum to all persons in your dialysis facility responsible for infection prevention, employee health, and quality management reporting including: Infection Preventionists, Occupational Health Professionals, Nurse Managers, Directors of Quality Improvement, and Directors of Human Resources.

Annual vaccination is the most important measure to prevent seasonal influenza infection.[[4]](#footnote-4) Protecting healthcare personnel and preventing the transmission of influenza to patients and communities is a shared responsibility. DPH is dedicated to working with you to ensure that patients and personnel are protected. Thank you for your ongoing participation in this important initiative. Please submit questions concerning the reporting and data submission requirements to the Bureau of Health Care Safety and Quality at [dhcq.fludata@state.ma.us](mailto:dhcq.fludata@state.ma.us)

1. Note that the requirements under 105 CMR 140.150 apply to dialysis centers licensed under 105 CMR 145.000 pursuant to 105 CMR 145.900. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. <https://www.healthypeople.gov/node/4668/data_details> [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. <https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/hcp/acip-recs/vacc-specific/flu.html> [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. <http://www.cdc.gov/flu/professionals/infectioncontrol/healthcaresettings.htm> [↑](#footnote-ref-4)