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: Nursing Home Administrators

FROM: Elizabeth Kelley, MPH, MBA, Director

Bureau of Health Care Safety and Quality

DATE: December 20, 2022

RE: Reporting Seasonal Influenza Vaccination of Healthcare Personnel (HCP) at Massachusetts Nursing Homes for the 2022-2023 Influenza Season

The purpose of this memorandum is to remind Massachusetts Nursing Homes of the steps needed to fulfill the Massachusetts Department of Public Health (DPH) and Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) requirement to submit 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 memorandum for prior influenza seasons related to the reporting of seasonal influenza vaccination of healthcare personnel at nursing homes.

**Background**

As a condition of licensure, under 105 CMR 150.002(D)(8), DPH regulations require all licensed healthcare facilities to:

* Offer free-of-charge, annual influenza vaccine to all personnel (full and part-time employees, contracted employees, volunteers, house staff and students);
* 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 reporting and data collection guidelines of the Commissioner (105 CMR 150.002(D)(8)). DPH regulations do not allow for reporting 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.[[1]](#footnote-1) 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 HCP3.

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.

**Reporting for the 2022 - 2023 Influenza Season**

Consistent with the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) August 3, 2022 final rule, beginning with the 2022-2023 influenza season, DPH requires Nursing Homes to report HCP influenza vaccination summary data via CDC’s NHSN and make the data available to DPH in NHSN. NHSN training materials are located at: <http://www.cdc.gov/nhsn/training/index.html>

To facilitate timely, accurate and complete reporting of the HCP influenza vaccination measure, please ensure that this memorandum is forwarded to all persons in your healthcare facility responsible for infection prevention, employee health, and quality management reporting including but not limited to: Infection Preventionists, Occupational Health Professionals, Nursing and Medical Directors, Directors of Quality Improvement, and Directors of Human Resources.

Annual vaccination is the most important measure to prevent seasonal influenza infection.[[2]](#footnote-2) 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 and commitment 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

1. <https://www.healthypeople.gov/node/4668/data_details> [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. <http://www.cdc.gov/flu/professionals/infectioncontrol/healthcaresettings.htm>

3 <https://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/hcp/acip-recs/vacc-specific/flu.html> [↑](#footnote-ref-2)