



**Public Health Department
Mendocino County**

Healthy People, Healthy Communities



H. Andrew Coren, MD
Public Health Officer

Anne C. Molgaard, JD
Transition Director

October 1, 2021

TO: Mendocino County Acute Care Hospitals; Skilled Nursing Facilities; Outpatient Medical Clinics; and Clinical Offices

FROM: Andy Coren, M.D., Mendocino County Health Officer

SUBJECT: **Order/Strong Recommendation for Influenza Vaccination of Health Care Workers**

Influenza season will begin again soon. Influenza causes serious illness and the deaths of thousands of patients in the United States every year. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends annual influenza vaccination for everyone 6 months of age and older. This is an important step to protecting against this serious disease.

Hospitalized, ill and elderly patients are particularly vulnerable to influenza. Hence, influenza vaccination of health care workers (HCW's) is essential to protect our patients against influenza. Mandatory vaccination policies have been shown to increase HCW vaccination rates. Increased vaccination rates reduce HCW transmission of influenza to patients and reduce employee absenteeism.

During this pandemic there is an increase threat that Influenza and COVID together may significantly worsen transmission, severity, hospitalizations and mortality in our community. Therefore:

The Mendocino County Public Health Officer orders that:

- **All acute care hospitals and skilled nursing facilities in Mendocino County implement policies that mandate annual influenza vaccination for all health care workers.**
- **All acute care hospitals and skilled nursing facilities in Mendocino County implement policies that require mandatory masking of unimmunized health care workers when working in patient care areas for the duration of influenza season.**
- **All outpatient medical clinics in Mendocino County implement policies to mandate influenza vaccination or mandatory masking of unimmunized health care workers in patient care areas for the duration of the influenza season.**

Further, the Mendocino County Public Health Officer strongly recommends that:

- **Clinical offices consider policies that mandate employees receive annual flu vaccine or wear masks in patient care areas.**

Influenza season is defined as November 1 through April 30 of each year for purposes of this order, unless circumstances warrant otherwise. You will be notified of any change in the season dates. **This order remains in effect until modified or rescinded.**

Health care worker means all workers, whether employees, contractors, or volunteers, who have direct patient contact or work in patient care areas while patients are present.

For purposes of this order, unless otherwise required, **surgical or procedure facemasks** are adequate when masking is necessary.

If you have questions, please call Mendocino County Public Health Communicable Disease Program at 707-472-2713 or email me at corena@mendocinocounty.org