All Licensed Acute Care Hospitals within Santa Barbara County

From: Charity Dean, MD, MPH  
Santa Barbara County Public Health Officer  
Takashi Wada, MD, MPH  
Santa Barbara County Public Health Director

Date: September 25, 2015

Re: Order for Licensed Acute Care Hospitals to Implement Influenza Vaccination Programs for Health Care Workers

Background Information

Influenza vaccination of health care workers (HCW) protects medically fragile patients and reduces employee absenteeism during influenza season. State law requires that acute care hospitals and certain employers offer influenza vaccinations to employees or have the employee sign a declination statement if they choose not to be vaccinated. While compliance to these existing laws is high, actual HCW vaccination rates are not. Mandatory vaccination with masking policies have been shown to increase HCW vaccination rates to above 90%.

In order to increase the rate of influenza vaccination of HCWs and to protect Santa Barbara County residents from influenza infection, I am issuing the following Health Officer Order.

Order

I, as Health Officer of Santa Barbara County, do hereby order all licensed acute care hospitals in Santa Barbara County to develop and implement a mandatory influenza vaccination policy and program for the 2015-2016 influenza season. The influenza vaccination program shall require a health care worker to provide evidence of vaccination with an influenza vaccine. If the health care worker is unable to provide such evidence, that worker shall wear a surgical mask while working in patient care areas during the influenza season.
Definitions

For the purposes of this order, "health care worker" shall be defined as any employed or non-employed individual who provides direct patient care or who works in a patient care area. This shall include physicians, ancillary staff, support staff, and volunteers.

Individual hospitals may choose to expand this definition of HCW to include all persons working on hospital properties and such an expanded definition will be supported by public health for that particular hospital.

For the purposes of this order, "influenza vaccine" shall be defined as a vaccine approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration and recommended by the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices for the 2015-2016 influenza season.

For the purposes of this order, "influenza season" is defined as November 1, 2015 to March 31, 2016. If influenza surveillance data suggests that the influenza season may end before or extend beyond March 31, 2016, then this order may be amended to shorten or extend the influenza season definition.

For the purposes of this order, "patient care area" shall be defined and determined by the facility, in consultation with the Santa Barbara County Public Health Department. This may include all hospital properties if so determined by the facility.

For the purposes of this order, "licensed acute care hospital" shall include the following facilities:

- Santa Barbara Cottage Hospital
- Goleta Valley Cottage Hospital
- Santa Ynez Valley Cottage Hospital
- Marian Regional Medical Center
- Lompoc Valley Medical Center

Resources

Santa Barbara County is committed to assisting facilities that are subject to this order. Please contact the Immunization Program at (805) 681-5280 if we may assist you.

Signed:

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Health Officer, Santa Barbara County Public Health Department

Takashi Wada, MD, MPH  
Director, Santa Barbara County Public Health Department