



# What's Happening Nationally with HCW Influenza Immunization?

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## Disclaimer

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The views and opinions expressed today are my own. They do not necessarily represent the views or policies of the Mayo Clinic, the NIH, CDC, DoD, ACIP, ISV, ACP, NFID or any other governmental agency or professional society with which I am associated or hold an office.

## The Federal Government

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- **Centers for Disease Control and the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices**
  - CDC/ACIP states: “All health-care workers should be vaccinated against influenza annually.”
- **Department of Defense**
  - All military HCWs will receive influenza vaccine annually unless medically exempted.
  - All civilian HCWs who have contracts for delivering health care to DoD recipients must also receive annual flu vaccine.
- **U.S. Public Health Service:**
  - All PHS employees will receive an annual influenza vaccine unless medically exempted. Those not receiving flu vaccine will be ineligible for promotion.

## Professional Associations

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- **Association for Professionals in Infection Control**
  - “APIC recommends that influenza vaccine be required annually for all healthcare personnel with direct patient care.”
- **Society of Hospital Epidemiologists of America**
  - All HCWs should receive influenza vaccine annually unless they have a contraindication or actively decline vaccination.
- **American Nurses Association**
  - Annual influenza immunization of RNs is “an ethical responsibility.” The ANA “is adamant about nurses receiving flu vaccine...”
- **Infectious Diseases Society of America**
  - Requiring influenza immunization of all HCWs, with informed declination, is the “standard of care”.

## Other Organizations and Local Governments

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- **Hospital Infection Control Practice Advisory Committee**
  - Obtain a signed declination from HCWs who decline influenza vaccination for reasons other than medical contraindications.
- **Leapfrog Group Hospital Quality and Patient Safety Survey**
  - Safe Practice #26: "Vaccinate healthcare workers against influenza to protect both them and patients from influenza. Employees refusing vaccination should have this refusal noted."
- **State Legislatures**
  - Seven states have mandated influenza immunization of HCWs and 15 states for HCWS in long-term care settings.

## What Has Not Worked to Achieve Near-Universal HCW Vaccination?

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- **Passive voluntary vaccination programs**
  - Interventions based on education
  - Free vaccination at worksites
  - Convenient times and locations
  - Mobile vaccination carts
  - Incentives
- **Combinations of all of the above**
- **Note: These interventions are costly in time and personnel!**

## Flu Vaccination: A Requirement of Employment

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- **Mandatory policies** have been implemented for HCWs employed by:
  - Virginia Mason Clinic
  - Barnes Jewish Hospital System
  - DoD (including civilian contractors)
  - Others
- **Results**
  - Pushback—there was *far less* resistance than feared
  - Preliminary data: HCW absenteeism dropped upon implementation of the new policy (VM)

## Reality Check: HCW Susceptibility and Transmission

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- There have been documented cases of novel H1N1 influenza being transmitted to HCWs during brief exposure to patients
- In accordance with CDC guidelines, one HCW in Minnesota was sent:
  - To her PCP
  - Who sent her to the local urgent care center
  - Who sent her to a hospital ER for treatment
- This approach is inappropriate and places patients and other HCWs at risk

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Assuming there is another wave of pandemic influenza this autumn as the WHO predicts, are we going to allow HCWs who are not immunized to care for patients?



## For Handouts of Slides or References

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Thanks! Gregory A. Poland, MD

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