



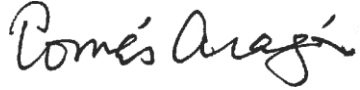
London Breed
Mayor

San Francisco Department of Public Health
Grant Colfax, MD
Director of Health
Tomás J. Aragón, MD, DrPH
Health Officer

MEMORANDUM

DATE: 2020-09-17

TO: Hospitals, Skilled Nursing, and other Long-Term Care Facilities in San Francisco

FROM: Tomás J. Aragón, MD, DrPH, Health Officer 

SUBJECT: **Health Officer Order:** Mandatory Influenza Vaccination of Health Care Workers During Influenza Season

I am issuing a Health Officer order mandating that all **hospitals, skilled nursing, and other long-term care facilities** in the City and County of San Francisco require their health care workers (“HCWs”) to receive an annual influenza vaccination on or before October 31 of each year or, if they decline for whatever reason, **to provide a signed declination.**

For **other clinical facilities**, we strongly recommend implementation of a similar policy.

Based on statewide influenza epidemiology and in accordance with the practice in many other California counties, this year we will again define the influenza season as spanning from November 1 through April 30 (11/1/2020-4/30/2021). Modifications may still be possible based on local epidemiology, but are unlikely to result in a shorter seasonal span.

This year, the COVID-19 pandemic has caused and is continuing to cause short- and long-term health consequences, significant burdens on the health care system, and untold societal and social disruption as well as economic harm. San Francisco has experienced surges in infections and hospitalizations due to SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19, and the threat of the virus is ongoing.

It is likely that SARS-CoV-2 infections and seasonal influenza infections will occur simultaneously during the 2020-21 influenza season. There is as yet no approved vaccine for prevention of COVID-19, but we do have an array of FDA-approved, safe and effective vaccines for the prevention of seasonal influenza.

Seasonal influenza vaccination is especially important this year in the context of the COVID-19 pandemic. Prevention of influenza is critical to reducing anticipated surge demands for health care services, including hospitalizations and testing persons with symptoms of influenza-like illness.

HCWs are at risk for influenza illness and can transmit the virus to their patients and coworkers. Patients in our health care facilities, especially young children, pregnant women, the elderly, and those with chronic health conditions, are at greater risk for influenza-related hospitalizations and death. Moreover, HCW influenza-related illness can cause absenteeism, placing further strain on our limited health care resources, and is preventable by means of annual vaccination.

Healthy People 2020 objectives target a 90 percent seasonal influenza vaccination rate for all health care personnel.ⁱ Comprehensive mandatory vaccination programs have been associated with health care worker vaccination rates above 95%.ⁱⁱ

California law requires that hospitals, skilled nursing facilities, long-term care facilities, and certain other health care facilities offer influenza vaccination annually to employees, and for those employees that decline such vaccination, maintain a record of the signed declination form.ⁱⁱⁱ Operators of other clinical facilities, services, or operations are reminded that if they fall under the ATD Standard they must similarly provide their employees with annual influenza vaccinations and maintain records of declinations. Determination of the applicability of the ATD Standard is the responsibility of individual employers.

Order

Under the authority of California Health and Safety Code Sections 101040, 101085, and 120175, I, as the Health Officer of the City and County of San Francisco, am requiring that each and every hospital, skilled nursing, and long-term care facility in the City and County of San Francisco implement a program requiring its health care workers to receive an annual influenza vaccination on or before October 31 of each year or, if they decline for whatever reason, to provide a signed declination. All such facilities must continue to enforce compliance with state and local face covering requirements for all health care workers and visitors.

Basis of Order

In light of the intersection between influenza and COVID-19 risks, this Order is issued in accordance with, and incorporates by reference, the March 4, 2020 Proclamation of a State of Emergency issued by Governor Gavin Newsom, the March 12, 2020 Executive Order (Executive Order N-25-20) issued by Governor Gavin Newsom, the February 25, 2020 Proclamation by the Mayor Declaring the Existence of a Local Emergency issued by Mayor London Breed, as supplemented on March 11, 2020, the March 6, 2020 Declaration of Local Health Emergency Regarding Novel Coronavirus 2019 (COVID-19) issued by the Health Officer, and guidance issued by the California Department of Public Health, as each of them have been and may be supplemented.

Effective Date and Duration of Order

This Order shall become effective at 12:01 a.m. on September 18, 2020 and will continue to be in effect until it is rescinded, superseded, or amended in writing by the Health Officer, or upon the

termination of the local health emergency related to COVID-19, whichever is earlier. This Order temporarily supersedes prior health officer orders for mandatory influenza vaccination. Upon termination of the local health emergency related to COVID-19, the prior orders of the Health Officer related to influenza vaccination among health care workers shall no longer be suspended and shall be in effect.

Facilities Subject to this Order

This order applies to all hospitals, skilled nursing, and other long-term care facilities in the City and County of San Francisco. For other clinical facilities, we strongly recommend implementation of a similar policy.

Definition of Health Care Worker

For the purposes of this order, "health care workers" or "HCW" are persons, paid and unpaid, full-time or part-time, employees or contractors, working in the licensed health care facility, who have direct patient contact or who work in patient care areas.

Severability

If any provision of this Order or its application to any person or circumstance is held to be invalid, then the remainder of the Order, including the application of such part or provision to other persons or circumstances, shall not be affected and shall continue in full force and To this end, the provisions of this Order are severable.

I appreciate your help and support in protecting the residents of the City and County of San Francisco. For any additional questions about this Order, please contact the SFPDPH Communicable Disease Prevention Unit at (415) 554-2955.

Cc: Grant Colfax, MD, Director of Health
Julie Van Nostern, Deputy City Attorney

ⁱ See <https://www.healthypeople.gov/2020/topics-objectives/topic/immunization-and-infectious-diseases/objectives>

ⁱⁱ Rakita, RM, et al. (2010). Mandatory influenza vaccination of health care workers: a 5-year study. *Infection Control and Hospital Epidemiology*, 31, 881-888.

ⁱⁱⁱ Cal. Health & Saf. Code § 1288.7, Cal. Code Regs., tit. 8, §5199: Aerosol Transmissible Diseases Standard of Cal OSHA, effective September 1, 2010 (the "ATD Standard").