

Department: Human Resources
Title: Influenza and Communicable Disease Prevention
Policy No: HR 9.7
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Last Review Date:
Last Revised Date:

Policy: Influenza is a serious illness causing significant morbidity and mortality and adversely affecting the public health each year. Health care personnel are known to be able to transmit the virus to patients and each other.

In as much, influenza-related absenteeism among health-care personnel can cause significant reductions in a health care organization's capacity to deliver care, especially during a time of an epidemic or pandemic.

Although several measures can be taken to reduce the spread of influenza, regulatory agencies and professional associations recommend the influenza vaccination as the primary way to prevent health care-associated transmission of influenza.

Because voluntary campaigns have been unsuccessful in accomplishing satisfactory vaccination rates of employee, the following guidelines have been implemented to protect our patients and co-workers:

Vaccination and Education

1. Effective November 16th, 2009, influenza vaccination plan will be required annually for all employed personnel, volunteers, students and contracted staff.
2. Annual education related to the importance of Influenza Vaccination will be met via healthstream assigned courses.
3. Vaccination will be considered mandatory for all employees, exceptions may include:
 - a. Those who have an allergy or medical contraindication to the vaccine or a component of the vaccine.
 - i. Allergy confirmation will be required for the employee health file beginning 2010.
 - b. Those who have requested religious, cultural declination
 - i. Accommodation to those who chose to request religious declination and not participate - will be met via personal protective equipment (PPE) masks per the Staff Rights Policy, HR 2.16.
 - ii. Guidelines in requesting accommodation should be followed per policy. (HR 2.16).
4. Effective November 16th, 2009, those who have not been vaccinated will be required to wear a PPE mask in patient care areas.

- a. Failure to wear the mask will result in action per Medical Center's Performance Accountability policy (HR 8.1), including termination.
5. Patient care areas are defined for the purposes of this policy as those places where treatment and responsibility of care for patients are given. Examples include but not limited to, patient rooms, patient and family waiting areas, corridors to patient rooms, etc.
6. Should you receive vaccination via another facility or your medical health care provider, proof of vaccination will be required for your Employee Health file.
7. In the event of vaccine shortage, the Medical Center will reassess time frames and requirements of required vaccination.

Reporting and Employee Illnesses

1. Employees are encouraged to report symptoms or exposure to a communicable disease.
 - a. Reasons include: approval of necessary absences / leave, continuity of safe work environment, prevention of future exposures.
 - i. Medical Information will be kept confidential consistent with existing policies
2. Infected employees are prohibited to come to work.
3. Employees who report to work while infected may be subject to disciplinary action.
4. Infected individuals will stay at home until symptoms resolve or per current guidelines as adopted by the Medical Center.
5. Absences due to symptoms of a communicable disease during a hospital or State/Federal designated outbreak will be considered excused/approved with proper reporting and documentation.
6. Absences which fall under the Leave of Absences policies will be treated as such. (HR 4.12 a-e).
7. Employees are eligible to use PTO (paid time-off) during absence.
8. When returning to work, employees may be asked to provide documentation for fit-for-duty, certifying they are safely able to perform work duties and do not pose a risk of infection to others.