

# ***The University of Arizona Health Network Tucson, Arizona***

## **SUBJECT: Universal Participation in Influenza Vaccination**

**POLICY: UAHN HR 201** (This policy does not replace any currently existing policies)

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**Responsible Person:** John Marques

**Approval Date:** September 18, 2013

**Effective Date:** September 18, 2013

### **PURPOSE:**

The University of Arizona Health Network (UAHN) and affiliated hospitals, The University of Arizona Medical Center – University Campus (“UC”), The University of Arizona Medical Center – South Campus (“SC”) and The University of Arizona Outpatient Centers recognize their responsibility to provide employees a workplace free of recognized hazards.

Influenza (“the flu”) is a contagious respiratory illness caused by influenza viruses. It can cause mild to severe illness and, at times, can lead to death. The most effective way to prevent infection from an influenza virus is through annual influenza vaccination and hand hygiene.

Annual influenza vaccination protects patients and staff and the integrity of the UAHN workforce. Influenza infections result in approximately 150,000 hospital admissions and 24,000 deaths annually which are preventable deaths. The Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends that all health care personnel receive the annual flu vaccine.

This policy is intended to maximize vaccination rates against influenza among the personnel of the UAHN and the medical staff of UC, SC; its clinics and ambulatory care centers, and especially those whose work requires their presence in clinical settings. The goal is to protect patients, employees, medical staff, employees’ family members, others affiliated with UAHN, and the broader community from influenza infection through annual immunization.

### **POLICY:**

It is expected that all UAHN employees, faculty, residents, fellows, temporary workers, trainees, volunteers, students, vendors, medical staff and privileged practitioners, regardless of employer, who provide on-site services will receive an annual influenza vaccination. This is in accordance with patient safety standards and to provide a safe workplace for employees.

### **DEFINITIONS:**

Health Care Personnel (HCP) are all employees, faculty, residents, fellows, temporary workers, trainees, volunteers, students, vendors, medical staff and privileged practitioners, regardless of employer who work in any UAHN areas.

Patient is an individual undergoing medical assessment or active treatment.

## **PROCEDURE:**

### **1. Vaccination Requirement**

1.1. Influenza vaccination shall be provided free of charge, as a benefit, through the Employee Health Department to anyone with a UAHN badge. Prior to the annual onset of influenza season and when the most current vaccination recommendations are published by the Centers of Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), UAHN Employee Health Department will inform the employees and privileged practitioners of the following:

- Dates when influenza vaccine(s) are available
- Procedure for receiving vaccination
- Procedure for submitting documentation of vaccine obtained outside UAHN
- Procedure for declining due to a qualified exemption

1.2. Annually, HCP are expected to do the following:

1.2.1. Receive the influenza vaccine(s) by January 31st, 2014 which will be provided free of charge, as a benefit, through the Employee Health (EH) Department.

1.2.2. Provide EH with proof of immunization if an HCP is vaccinated through services other than EH (e.g., private physician office, public clinics) by January 31<sup>st</sup>, 2014. Proof of immunization must include a copy of documentation indicating the vaccine was received.

1.2.3. Comply with the designated procedure for obtaining a permissible exemption by January 15, 2014 as described in this policy.

### **2. Exemptions**

#### **2.1. Medical Exemption**

2.1.1. Standard criteria for medical exemption will be established based on recommendations from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

2.1.2. Personnel requesting exemption must provide documentation of medical contraindications to Employee Health (EH) by January 15th, 2014 absent extenuating circumstances. Request for Exemption will be submitted on an approved form.

2.1.3. A request for medical exemption will be evaluated individually by EH within twenty (20) business days after the request is presented to EH. If the exemption is for allergy to eggs, the most current CDC ACIP recommendations will be followed by EH.

2.1.4. The HCP must resubmit the request each year even if the exemption is a permanent condition as vaccine technology may change which will eliminate the issue regarding allergies.

2.1.5. When an exemption is granted, the exempt HCP will agree to wear a surgical mask at all times while in any UAHN patient care or clinical care areas when within six (6) feet of a patient during the influenza season (season is identified by the UAHN Infection Prevention and Epidemiology Program in consultation with the UAHN Medical Microbiology Laboratories).

## 2.2. Religious Exemption

2.2.1. An individual requesting exemption because of religious reasons must request an exemption, in writing, to Human Resources Staff Relations, and attach documentation from his/her religious authority or clergy on letterhead stationery that supports the exemption. Requests for Exemption will be submitted on an approved form by January 15<sup>th</sup>, 2014.

2.2.2. The individual requesting the religious exemption will be notified, in writing, as to whether his/her request for religious exemption has been granted.

2.2.3. When an exemption is granted, the exempt HCP will agree to wear a surgical mask at all times while in any UAHN patient care or clinical care areas when within six (6) feet of a patient during the influenza season (season is identified by the UAHN Infection Prevention and Epidemiology Program in consultation with the UAHN Medical Microbiology Laboratories).

## 3. Vaccine Shortage Contingency

3.1. In the event of an influenza vaccine shortage, UAHN Infection Prevention and Epidemiology Program (IPEP) and the Emergency Preparedness Department will determine an appropriate distribution plan for the resources available. EH, IPED, Human Resources, Pharmacy, and Administration will conduct the evaluation with other departments across all entities included as needed when vaccine shortages occur. Influenza vaccine will be offered to personnel based on risk to patient population cared for, job function, and risk of exposure to influenza. Priority will be given to those who provide direct patient care with prolonged face-to-face contact with patients and/or have highest risk of exposure to patients with influenza. Those who are prioritized to receive vaccine will be held to the universal participation standard. Those who are not prioritized to receive vaccine will not be held to the universal participation standard for the duration of the vaccine shortage period, and recommendations will be provided to those who do not receive vaccine by UAHN IPEP in conjunction with the institutional Infection Control entities.

## **4. Compliance**

4.1. Beginning with the 2013-2014 influenza season, it is strongly recommend that all HCP receive the influenza vaccination. Any HCP covered by this policy who elects to decline the vaccination requirement and does not receive an exemption will not be permitted to enter patient care or clinical areas during the influenza season (as defined above).

## **5. Responsibilities**

### **5.1. Health Care Personnel**

5.1.1. Responsibility to receive influenza vaccination by the stated deadline or to complete the designated exemptions as outlined in EXEMPTIONS.

### **5.2. UAHN IPEP**

5.2.1 Establish annual vaccination requirements.

5.2.2 Define the influenza season.

### **5.3 Human Resources Department, Staff Relations**

5.3.1 Accept, evaluate, and approve requests for religious accommodations through their appropriate institutional office.

5.3.2 Answer questions related to this policy.

### **5.4 Employee Health**

5.4.1 Administer and track vaccinations.

5.4.2 Accept, evaluate, and approve requests for medical exemption. EH will notify Human Resources Staff Relations about individuals granted medical exemptions.

5.4.3 Send written notice to providers with clinical privileges and Clinical Service Chiefs of vaccination requirement, specifying the due date, alternatives and availability. Employee Health shall provide written notice to all providers by mid-January of 2014.

5.4.4 EH will evaluate organizational HCP vaccination rates, frequency, and reasons for vaccine declinations monthly between September and January and report this information to the Infection Prevention Committee and the Safety Committee at University Campus and South Campus.

5.4.5 EH will submit the National Health Surveillance Network (NHSN) required data.

5.5 Supervisors and Managers

5.5.1 Strongly recommend that all Health Care Personnel are vaccinated against influenza each year unless exception has been granted as described in this policy.

5.5.2 Enforce all provisions of this policy as a patient safety standard and safe workplace.