

WEISMAN CHILDREN'S REHABILITATION HOSPITAL (WCRH)

INFECTION CONTROL MANUAL

SUBJECT: Influenza Vaccination Program For Employees No: EH111

EFFECTIVE DATE: 1/99

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REVIEWED/REVISED: 7/99, 4/03, 5/03, 10/04, 11/05, 8/06, 8/07, 5/08, 1/09, 2/10, 1/11, 1/12, 1/13, 1/14, 1/17, 1/18, 1/19, 3/19, 9/19, 12/20, 3/21, 3/24

BACKGROUND:

NJ A1576/S1003 was signed into law on Jan 13, 2020. This law requires implementation of an annual influenza vaccination program for all employees in accordance with current recommendations of the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices of the Federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) (NJ Leg.2020).

The program must include the following elements:

- Annually provide an on-site or off-site influenza vaccination to each employee;
- Require that each employee receive an influenza vaccination annually, no later than November 1 of the current influenza season
- Provide the vaccination that is determined by the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, except that an employee may, instead of receiving the influenza vaccination at the facility:
 - Present acceptable proof of having received the vaccination. This proof must include:
 - An attestation form designated by the facility from the employee that provides proof that the employee received a current vaccination from another vaccination source; the lot number of the vaccination must be included;
 - Present acceptable proof of medical exemption. This proof must include:
 - A medical exemption, which shall be submitted using a form designated by the New Jersey Department of Health, stating that the influenza vaccination for that employee is medically contraindicated, as enumerated by the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) of the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

PURPOSE:

WEISMAN CHILDREN'S REHABILITATION HOSPITAL (WCRH) recognizes its responsibility to provide employees a workplace free of recognized hazards. This policy is intended to maximize vaccination rates against influenza among WCRH personnel, especially those whose work requires their presence in clinical settings. The goal is to protect residents, employees, employees' family members, students, others affiliated with WCRH, and the broader community from influenza infection.

Annual influenza vaccination has been found to be both safe and effective in reducing the risk of influenza and health-care related transmission. The Centers for Disease control and Prevention (CDC) recommend vaccination of all workers in a health care setting.

POLICY:

1. As a condition of employment, annual influenza vaccination will be compulsory for all employees, students, volunteers, and consultants who provide services at WCRH, except for those who possess an approved medical exception as defined by the New Jersey Department of Health. An attestation of a medical exemption shall be subject to approval by the facility following a review by the facility to confirm the medical exemption is consistent with standards enumerated by the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP). (NJLeg, 2020).
2. Anyone who has an approved medical exemption, which would allow them to decline the vaccination, will be required to wear a surgical or procedural mask, provided by the facility, while they are in the building unless they are in a designated break area.
3. Any staff member who declines to receive the influenza vaccine without an approved medical exemption will be terminated from employment.
4. Documentation of vaccination or approved medical exemption will be due no later than November 1 of the current influenza season.

SCOPE AND RESPONSIBILITY:

1. It is the responsibility of the institution's administration to offer the influenza vaccine free of charge, on an annual basis to all employees and volunteers.

PROCEDURE:

1. WEISMAN CHILDREN'S REHABILITATION HOSPITAL will inform all personnel of:
 - a. Requirement(s) for vaccination.
 - b. Annual education regarding influenza vaccination, non-vaccine influenza control measures, and the symptoms, transmission, and potential impact of influenza.
 - c. Date (when influenza vaccines are available and established deadline for completion).
 - d. Procedure for receiving vaccination.
 - e. Procedure for submitting written documentation of vaccine obtained outside of WCRH.
 - f. Procedure and form for declining due to a qualified medical exemption.
 - g. Consequences of refusing vaccination.
2. All employees will be required to obtain the influenza vaccine or provide proof of vaccination at an alternate site or medical exemption.
3. The Infection Control Professional (ICP) will distribute forms to the Department Heads prior to the start of vaccination each flu season.
4. The consent/declination forms will be maintained as a permanent part of the employee's health record.
5. WCRH will provide the influenza vaccination annually at no cost to all employees/independent licensed practitioners.
6. The influenza vaccine will be administered by the ICP or designee.

7. Any febrile person should not be vaccinated until the fever has subsided.
8. Injections should be administered intramuscularly (IM), preferable in the deltoid muscle.
9. Documentation of immunization will be done on the consent form and on the influenza vaccination record. If the employee chooses to be vaccinated elsewhere, proof of vaccination must be provided to the Infection Control Department.
10. Employees who have not been vaccinated must wear a mask when in a clinical area during flu season. Influenza season will be determined by the Infection Control Department.
11. To be compliant with this requirement, personnel must:
 - Receive the required vaccination by the announced date
 - If applicable, provide:
 - o Documentation of the lot number of the vaccination received
 - o Documentation that they have received the approved vaccination from another vaccination source
 - o Proof of compliance with the designated procedure for obtaining a permissible medical exemption as described in the policy, prior to the announced date of influenza precautions for the facility.
12. All employees will be provided Inactivated Influenza Vaccine.
13. All employees will complete a consent form prior to immunization (see attached), and this form will be maintained as a permanent part of the employee's health record.
14. Any employee who declines the flu vaccine will need to fill out a declination form including a medical exemption for his/her declination as provided by the New Jersey Department of Health
15. A copy of the most current Influenza Vaccine Information Sheet (VIS) will be given to each employee to be read prior to receiving the vaccine.
16. The influenza vaccine will be provided to all current and new employees hired through the end of March.
17. The influenza vaccine will be administered by the ICP or designee.
18. A separate influenza vaccination record will be maintained by the Infection Preventionist, of all employees who receive the Influenza vaccine.

EXEMPTIONS

Medical

1. Personnel requesting exemption must submit a declination form (See Appendix) and provide documentation of medical contraindications from their physician by announced date.
2. A request for medical exception will be evaluated by the Infection Preventionist.

Requirements upon Receiving Exception

1. If an exception is granted, the individual will sign written documentation attesting that he/she will wear a mask properly at all times as per policy/procedure.

RECORDKEEPING & REPORTING

1. WEISMAN CHILDREN'S REHABILITATION HOSPITAL will maintain a record or attestation, as applicable, of influenza vaccinations and medical exemptions for each employee and retain each signed declination form.
2. Collective information will be reported to the department of health as directed, which will include vaccination percentage rate and medical exemptions.

SUSPENSION OF PROGRAM

1. WEISMAN CHILDREN'S REHABILITATION HOSPITAL may suspend the program only if the Health Commissioner declares a shortage of available vaccine.

PERFORMANCE IMPROVEMENT

1. WEISMAN CHILDREN'S REHABILITATION HOSPITAL will conduct an annual evaluation of the program with a goal of improving the vaccination rate and report results to the Infection Control Committee.

REFERENCES

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (2023, August 23). *Summary: 'Prevention and Control of Seasonal Influenza with Vaccines: Recommendations of the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) – United States, 2023-24'*.

<https://www.cdc.gov/flu/professionals/acip/summary/summary-recommendations.htm#table4>

New Jersey Legislature. (2019). Influenza program healthcare

https://www.njleg.state.nj.us/2018/Bills/A2000/1576_R2.PDF