

SULLIVAN COUNTY PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICES

P. O. Box 590/50 Community Lane

PREVENTION OF INFLUENZA TRANSMISSION POLICY

POLICY: SCPHS encourages ALL employees, volunteers, contracted workers, students, interns, and others affiliated with SCPHS whose activities involve contact or proximity to patients or residents to receive annual vaccination against influenza.

PURPOSE:

1. To set forth policies and procedures for the prevention of healthcare worker-associated transmission of influenza to patients/residents/members of the community
2. To protect patients/residents from avoidable exposure to influenza illness, to minimize the spread of influenza in the general public, and to protect the health of staff members and their families
3. To comply with applicable laws

RESPONSIBLE PARTY: All employees, volunteers, interns, and contracted staff

Original Approval: 10/1/13

Revised: 9/16

Revised 10/18

APPLICABLE LAWS:

10 NYCRR Section 2.59: Prevention of Influenza Transmission by Healthcare and Residential Facility and Agency Personnel

Public Health Law Sections 225, 2800, 2803, 3612, and 4010

EQUIPMENT:

Influenza Vaccine

Face Mask (Surgical or Procedural) (if necessary as required per the NYSDOH Mask Mandate guidelines- See Section 5 of this policy titled Mask Mandate).

DEFINITIONS:

Staff or Personnel: All persons employed or affiliated with the CHHA or the Local Health Department (SCPHS), including volunteers, contracted workers, students, interns, and other affiliates of SCPHS whose activities involve contact or proximity to patients or residents of the Home Health Agency, WIC Clinic and other Public Health Clinics.

Health Department: Sullivan County Public Health Services, all program areas

Influenza Season: Period of time during which influenza is prevalent as determined by the Commissioner of the New York State Department of Health.

Influenza Vaccine: Vaccine currently licensed in the United States for immunization and distribution by the Food and Drug Administration.

PROCEDURE:

1. Effective October 1, 2013, all staff or personnel in the Health Department are required to comply with Public Health Law regarding the prevention of influenza transmission. Such compliance shall be achieved by:
 - a. Vaccination against influenza on an annual basis; or
 - b. Wearing an appropriate face mask at all times while in areas where patients or residents may be present during the Commissioner of the New York State Department of Health-determined influenza season.
2. Vaccination against influenza shall be offered and provided at no charge to all staff or personnel of the Health Department working in any program or job title. The influenza vaccination status of all staff or personnel for each influenza season shall be documented by the Health Department in each individual's personnel record, health record or other record. Documentation of Health Department-administered staff vaccination for influenza shall

include the name and address of the individual, the date of the vaccination, and the lot number of the vaccine. Such documentation shall be confidential and protected health information under HIPAA.

3. The Health Department designee responsible for maintaining vaccination documentation shall keep records of the number and percentage of staff/personnel that have been vaccinated or declined vaccination, and this information shall be reported to the State Health Department upon request. A Health Department report shall be made of all individuals who decline influenza vaccination, regardless of the reason for declination. Declinations must be made in writing by the individual on the form designated (see attached).
4. A confidential report of the names of individuals, by department, who decline influenza vaccination, shall be provided to each appropriate Supervisor and the Department Head. The Department Head, Supervisor, or other designated individual shall confer privately with each person who has declined vaccination to include the following:
 - a. Explain the reasons why influenza vaccination is necessary for health care workers and explain the Public Health Law requirements for prevention of influenza transmission.
 - b. Ask the person to reconsider vaccination.
 - c. If the person persists in refusing vaccination, inform the person that they must wear a mask at all times during influenza season when in contact or proximity to patients or resident of the Health Department or when in any of the areas specified in section 5 below.
 - d. Inform the person that repeated failure to comply with the mask requirement after one verbal warning will result in formal disciplinary action consistent with personnel policies.
 - e. The individual conducting the conference shall record the discussion on a Record of Conference form designated for this purpose. The original of the Record of Conference shall be placed in the persons medical record personnel file.
 - f. Union representation for such conferences is not required but shall be permitted if the employee requests.
5. **Mask Mandate:** Any employee, contractor, volunteer, or student/intern affiliated with the Sullivan County Public Health Services Department who has not supplied SCPHS with evidence of current vaccination against influenza during the current influenza season shall wear a mask in all designated areas and other areas where members of the public are present. The NYS Mask Mandate cannot be used to alter the employee's usual work assignment.
 - a. The following areas are designated where unvaccinated staff or personnel must wear a mask during influenza season:
 1. All facilities where the Health Department's clinics are held and where residents are present, including elevators, offices, conference rooms, or general lobby/waiting area.
 2. Main entrance of building within six (6) feet of any patients or residents present.
 3. All areas within the Health Department where patients/residents may be present, including lobby, clinics, offices, and conference rooms
 4. In residences of all patients or residents receiving Home Health Agency services or home visits by employees of the Health Department.
 - b. The Health Department shall provide, at no charge, a readily accessible supply of surgical/procedural masks in all areas designated in this section.
6. **Mask Compliance:**
 - a. Supervisory home visits will include monitoring for compliance with the mask mandate during the current influenza season, and Supervisors shall provide ongoing monitoring of compliance of unvaccinated staff in their respective program areas.
 - b. Any unvaccinated staff or personnel who refuse or fail to comply with the mask requirements shall be given one verbal warning to comply immediately. If non-compliance recurs, the individual shall be referred to the Public Health Director or the Director of Patient Services for appropriate disciplinary action consistent with applicable personnel policies.

- c. No medical excuses from wearing a surgical mask shall be accepted for unvaccinated individuals. If an individual is medically unable to wear a mask during the influenza season, the individual shall be placed on administrative leave for the duration of the influenza season. **Compliance with Public Health Law is a condition of employment and no individual may be given a waiver from compliance with prevention of influenza transmission.**