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Health Advisory

Date: September 18, 2014

To: All Licensed Health Care Facilities in San Bernardino County

From: Maxwell Ohikhuare, MD *Amo*
Health Officer

Subject: Health Officer Order Regarding Influenza Vaccination of Healthcare Workers

Influenza season will begin in the fall. In your roles as leaders in healthcare and mine as the County Health Officer, I know that we share common goals:

- Minimizing the spread of Communicable Disease like influenza
- Providing excellent healthcare for our community and
- Keeping our healthcare workforce healthy

The best way to prevent transmission of a disease like influenza to those persons we serve is to mandate vaccination of healthcare workers.

Voluntary vaccination efforts have not yielded an acceptable rate in our County. Mandatory vaccination or masking policies have been shown to increase the healthcare workers vaccination rate to >95%. Our goals are to increase the rates of influenza vaccination of healthcare workers, reduce employee absenteeism during influenza season and reduce healthcare worker to patient transmission of influenza.

Therefore, as the Health Officer of San Bernardino County, and under the authority of California Health & Safety Code section 120175, I am requiring that all healthcare facilities in San Bernardino County implement a program requiring their healthcare workers to receive an annual Influenza vaccination. For those healthcare workers that decline, healthcare facilities must implement a plan to prevent on-site healthcare workers affiliated with the facility from contracting and transmitting the influenza virus to patients. Such a plan may include requiring workers to wear a mask for the duration of influenza season, reassigning work activities or other actions appropriate to the individual facility.

This order is ongoing and applies to each influenza season unless rescinded. The influenza season is defined as November 1 to March 31 of the following year. If influenza surveillance data demonstrates an unusually late peak and continued wide spread of influenza activity in the spring, this period may be extended and communicated to local healthcare facilities.

This order applies to all licensed health care facilities in San Bernardino County to include hospitals, ambulatory, skilled nursing and long term care facilities.

I want to thank you for all your efforts to minimize the spread of the influenza virus, ensure patient safety and provide outstanding healthcare for our residents. For additional questions, please contact our Communicable Disease Section at 1 (800) 722-4794.