The Commonwealth of Massachusetts

Executive Office of Health and Human Services

Department of Public Health

Bureau of Health Care Safety and Quality

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**MEMORANDUM**

TO: Nursing Home Administrators

Rest Home Administrators

FROM: Elizabeth Daake Kelley, MBA, MPH

 Director, Bureau of Health Care Safety and Quality

DATE: February 22, 2022

RE: Seasonal Influenza Vaccination of Healthcare Personnel at Massachusetts Nursing Homes and Rest Homes for the 2021-2022 Influenza Season

The purpose of this memorandum is to remind Massachusetts Nursing Homes and Rest Homes of the process to report mandatory healthcare personnel (HCP) influenza data and to provide guidance for facilities to fulfill the Massachusetts Department of Public Health (DPH) requirement for submission of annual HCP influenza data to the Department **by April 15, 2022**.

This circular letter shall supersede all circular letters and memorandum for prior influenza seasons related to the reporting of seasonal influenza vaccination of healthcare personnel at Nursing Homes and Rest Homes.

**Background**

As a condition of licensure, under 105 CMR 150.002(D)(8), DPH regulations require all licensed healthcare facilities to:

* Offer free-of-charge, annual influenza vaccine to all personnel (full and part-time employees, contracted employees, volunteers, house staff and students);
* Document receipt of influenza vaccine administered within and outside the facility or document the declination of immunization; and
* Report information to DPH, documenting compliance with the vaccination requirement, in accordance with reporting and data collection guidelines of the Commissioner. (105 CMR 150.002(D)(8)). DPH regulations do not allow for reporting unknown vaccine status.

**Reporting for the 2021 - 2022 Influenza Season**

* DPH requires all Massachusetts Nursing Homes and Rest Homes to report HCP influenza data through Virtual Gateway’s Health Care Facility Reporting System (HCFRS)by creating a new case and using the incident type “**HCP** **influenza reporting**”.
* Only reports submitted through HCFRS will be accepted.
* Each licensed Nursing Home, and Rest Home is required to report the following:
	+ Number of healthcare facility employees who worked in the healthcare facility for at least 1 day between October 1, 2021 and March 31, 2022
	+ Number of healthcare facility employees who received an influenza vaccine at the healthcare facility since the influenza vaccine became available this season
	+ Number of healthcare facility employees who provided a written report or documentation of influenza vaccination outside the healthcare facility since influenza vaccine became available this season
	+ Number of healthcare facility employees who have a medical contraindication to the influenza vaccine
	+ Number of healthcare facility personnel who report a religious exemption to the influenza vaccine.
	+ Number of healthcare facility personnel who otherwise declined the influenza vaccine (unvaccinated at time of reporting).

*NEW*

* **To assist facilities in documenting, monitoring and tracking HCP influenza data throughout the flu season, DPH has developed a Facility Flu Tracking Tool available at the following link:** [**https://www.mass.gov/info-details/flu-vaccination-reporting-requirements-for-health-care-personnel**](https://www.mass.gov/info-details/flu-vaccination-reporting-requirements-for-health-care-personnel)**.**

Please see Data Submission Instructions for detailed instructions on how to successfully complete and submit HCP Influenza Vaccination data for the 2021-2022 season.

To facilitate timely, accurate and complete reporting of the HCP influenza vaccination measure, please ensure that this circular letter is forwarded to all persons in your healthcare facility responsible for infection prevention, employee health, and quality management reporting including but not limited to: Infection Preventionists, Occupational Health Professionals, Nursing and Medical Directors, Directors of Quality Improvement, and Directors of Human Resources.

Annual vaccination is the most important measure to prevent seasonal influenza infection.[[1]](#footnote-1) Protecting healthcare personnel and preventing the transmission of influenza to patients and communities is a shared responsibility. DPH is dedicated to working with you to ensure that patients and personnel are protected. Thank you for your ongoing participation in this important initiative. Please submit questions concerning the reporting and data submission requirements to the Bureau of Health Care Safety and Quality at

dhcq.fludata@state.ma.us.

1. <http://www.cdc.gov/flu/professionals/infectioncontrol/healthcaresettings.htm> [↑](#footnote-ref-1)