

October 23, 2009

Dear colleagues,

I'm writing to make you aware of a new [policy](#) mandating flu vaccination for SHC medical staff members. This policy, adopted last week by the Medical Executive Committee, is intended to protect our own health and the health of our co-workers. It is also important as a public health measure - to improve SHC's ability to function well in the event of a public health disaster due to a severe flu epidemic. *But it is primarily intended to protect our patients*, many of whom are especially vulnerable to the potentially fatal effects of influenza infection.

In a nutshell, the new policy provides for administrative suspension of privileges (same as medical records suspensions; not reportable to the state) for medical staff members who do not comply with vaccination requirements for either seasonal or novel influenza. Such suspensions will remain in force until the member is vaccinated or until the policy is deactivated at the end of flu season.

This year's seasonal flu vaccine has already been available for some time and is provided free of charge to all SHC medical staff members. If you have already received the vaccine at SHC, you need do nothing more. If not, please refer to the [schedule for special vaccination clinics](#), or the [schedule for the regular Occupational Health Services satellite clinic](#).

If you get your vaccination outside of SHC, we will accept a copy of a preprinted vaccination form from the treating facility or a signed [attestation form](#) stating where and when you were vaccinated. Please send documentation to:

- Stanford OHS fax at 650-618-8661; or
- Email a scanned copy to occhealth@stanfordmed.org; or
- Mail to: Occupational Health Services, Main
1101 Welch Rd., C-3
Palo Alto, CA 94304
- Or use ID Mail #5772 for inter-office mail.

We strongly encourage everyone to be vaccinated as soon as possible, but medical staff members have until November 23 (one month from this announcement) to provide evidence of vaccination for seasonal flu. Once H1N1 vaccine is available to us (we currently await delivery from county authorities), you will receive another announcement specifying vaccination clinic times and a deadline for that vaccination as well.

You may be exempt if you are allergic to egg products or have religious objections to vaccination. Other compelling reasons for exemption may be considered as well (see policy).

We expect that some medical staff members may not agree with this policy. It is not the decision of any single individual, and it is not a Hospital or School of Medicine policy, but rather a policy of the Medical Staff, as represented by the MEC. Please be aware that the MEC did not come to this decision lightly. The difficulty in achieving adequate compliance with vaccination recommendations – both for medical staff members and also hospital employees - has been addressed multiple times without resolution. We also have carefully reviewed the epidemiology of influenza and the science of flu vaccination. In the end, as a self-governing medical staff with both statutory and ethical responsibility for patient safety at SHC, we concluded that we are obligated to require flu vaccination of our members in order to protect our patients.

We have attempted to address many of the common concerns, misconceptions and anticipated objections to a policy such as this in the attached [Q&A document](#). As always, I'm happy to hear any comments or suggestions directly from medical staff members, but I would appreciate it if you would review this document before assuming that your own perspective or concern may not have been properly considered.

I will be discussing this mandatory flu vaccination policy and the broader topic of physician accountability in this month's [Chief of Staff column](#) on the web version of the [Medical Staff Update](#). You will receive another communication notifying you when that column is posted.

Best,

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Chief of Staff

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