



Checklist for Implementing Influenza Vaccine Requirements for Healthcare Workers

Vaccination against influenza is the most important method to prevent spread of infection. For healthcare personnel who have not yet been vaccinated, the use of surgical masks may help limit exposure to respiratory infection or its spread to others.

In the event that masking precautions for healthcare workers are required to prevent spread of disease or control outbreaks (for example, during a Declaration of Widespread Influenza), facility administrators and supervisors are encouraged to review the following in preparation for implementation:

Supplies:

- Check your supplies of flu vaccine.
- Check your supplies or access to rapid flu or molecular flu testing.
- Check your supplies of surgical face masks.

Communications:

- All administrators should review Rhode Island's [Rules & Regulations Pertaining to the Immunization, Testing, and Health Screening for Health Care Workers](#). (See sections 1.4, 3.5.4, and 5.0, especially 5.3, 5.4, 5.5, and 5.7).
- Clearly communicate the masking requirement and precautions to employees while reinforcing importance of influenza vaccination as well as standard hand-washing and cough hygiene messages. Consider the following message for internal emails and other posted communications to staff:

“Vaccination against influenza is the most important method to prevent spread of infection. For healthcare personnel who have not yet been vaccinated, the use of surgical or procedure masks may help limit exposure to respiratory infection or its spread to others. In general, surgical masks can be worn continuously up to four hours. For mask reuse, careful attention should be made to (1) replace a mask immediately if it is damaged, (2) avoid touching the inside or outside of a mask that could be dirty, and (3) remove your worn mask and discard it promptly into the general trash, then perform hand hygiene before touching any personal or common use items.”
- Have advisory signs for the public about protection against influenza ready to post in English, Spanish, and other languages as needed.
- Inform the public who inquire that some healthcare workers who have not yet been vaccinated are wearing masks to help prevent the spread of influenza between patients and staff.

Masking Practices:

- Unvaccinated healthcare workers must wear a mask when they are involved in direct patient contact during a declaration of a widespread influenza period.
- Surgical masks should be changed generally at least every four (4) hours, or sooner if they become too moist or soiled.

More HEALTH Resources:

Immunization Information for Healthcare Workers (see “Immunization and Testing

Requirements for Healthcare Workers”:

www.health.ri.gov/immunization/for/healthcareworkers

Influenza Information for Healthcare Providers (see Treatment, Reporting, Vaccination, and other topics): www.health.ri.gov/flu/for/providers

To read the full Rhode Island Regulations Pertaining To Immunization, Testing, And Health Screening For Health Care Workers, please visit:

<http://sos.ri.gov/documents/archives/regdocs/released/pdf/DOH/7083.pdf>