PURPOSE

Influenza (the flu) is a contagious respiratory illness caused by influenza viruses. It can cause mild to severe illness, and at times can lead to death. The most effective way to prevent infection from an influenza virus is through annual influenza vaccination. Annual influenza vaccination protects our patients and our staff, and the integrity of the Suburban workforce. This policy is intended to maximize vaccination against influenza among the personnel of Suburban Hospital. The goal is to protect patients, employees, employees’ family members and the community from influenza infection through annual immunization.

DEFINITIONS

- Health Care Personnel (HCP): All employees and volunteers who provide services to or work in Suburban Hospital, outpatient facilities or clinics.
- Medical Staff: volunteer and employed physicians and allied health providers

POLICY

This policy defines the procedures for the mandatory seasonal influenza vaccination program for Suburban Hospital.

A. As a condition of employment, and in accordance with patient safety standards, Suburban Hospital requires all employees and volunteers to have annual influenza vaccination or to complete a statement of declination for qualified exceptions. Medical staff applying for privileges and reappointment must sign a statement of attestation that he/she will comply with the mandatory influenza vaccination policy.

B. Influenza vaccination shall be provided free of charge through Suburban Hospital’s Employee/ Occupational Health Services (OHS) to anyone with a Suburban Hospital badge.

C. Prior to the annual onset of influenza season and when the most current vaccination recommendations are published by the Centers of Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), Human Resources, Employee/Occupational Health Services and the Medical Staff Office will inform personnel about the following:

1. Requirement(s) for vaccination
2. Dates when influenza vaccine(s) are available
3. Procedure for receiving vaccination
4. Procedure for submitting written documentation of vaccine obtained outside of the Johns Hopkins system
5. Procedure for declining due to a qualified exception
6. Consequences of refusing vaccination

D. Annually, each individual covered by this policy must do one of the following:
1. Receive the influenza vaccine(s) by the December declared deadline, which will be provided free of charge through Suburban Hospital’s Employee/Occupational Health Services (OHS)
OR
2. Provide Hospital’s Employee/Occupational Health Services (OHS) or Medical Staff Office with proof of immunization if a HCP is vaccinated through services other than Hospital’s Employee/Occupational
Health Services (OHS) (i.e. private physician office, public clinics) by the December declared deadline. Proof of immunization must include a copy of documentation indicating the vaccine was received.

OR

3. Comply with the designated procedure for obtaining a permissible exception by October/November declared deadline, as described in this policy.

EXCEPTIONS

A. Medical
1. Exceptions to required immunization may be granted for certain medical contraindications. Standard criteria will be established and include:
   a. Documentation of severe allergy to the vaccine or components as defined by the most current recommendations of the CDC’s Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) (http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/mm60e0818a1.htm?s_cid=mm60e0818a1_e&source=govdelivery, Appendix 2).
   b. Guillain-Barré syndrome within six weeks of a prior influenza vaccine.

2. Personnel requesting exception must submit a declination form (Appendix 1) and provide documentation of medical contraindications (Appendix 3) to Hospital’s Employee/ Occupational Health Services (OHS) or Medical Staff Office by October/November declared deadline.

3. A request for medical exception will be evaluated individually by Hospital’s Employee/ Occupational Health Services (OHS) within twenty business days after presenting a request for exception to Suburban Hospital’s Employee/ Occupational Health Services (OHS). If the exception is for allergy to eggs, a non-egg based vaccine can be substituted with the most current CDC ACIP recommendations.

4. If exceptions are granted for a temporary condition, the individual must resubmit a request for exception each year

B. Religious

If an individual covered by this policy declines immunization because it conflicts with sincerely held religious beliefs, they must complete and submit to their manager a declination form and a request for religious accommodation form (Appendix 1, 4). Upon receipt of the employee’s request, the employee’s manager will forward the request for religious accommodation form to the Department of Human Resources and the declination form to Hospital’s Employee/ Occupational Health Services (OHS). These requests must be received by the October/November declared deadline, and will be reviewed by the Department of Human Resources as a request for religious accommodation.

C. Requirements upon Receiving Exception

If the exception is granted, the personnel will sign written documentation attesting that he/she will wear a mask
at all times while in Suburban Hospital, Off site Outpatient Departments or clinics during the designated influenza season.

COMPLIANCE

During the influenza season, any HCP who is not vaccinated via a granted exception must wear a surgical mask upon entering Suburban Hospital or Suburban Hospital off-site Outpatient Departments and Clinics. The effective dates will be identified by Johns Hopkins Health System (JHHS) Healthcare Epidemiology and Infection Control (HEIC) and/or the Montgomery County Health Department as determined by the statewide Syndromic Surveillance System.

1. Any employee covered by this policy who fails to comply with the vaccination requirement as of the December designated deadline will be placed on a one week, unpaid administrative leave. If, at the end of the administrative leave, the employee has not met the vaccination requirement, they will be considered to have voluntarily resigned.

2. Any employee or volunteer granted a medical or religious exception but who fails to wear a surgical mask as outlined above, during the influenza season will be subject to disciplinary action, up to and including termination.

3. Employed Physicians and Providers working for Suburban Hospital and voluntary medical staff who fail to comply with the hospital’s influenza vaccination policy and Medical Staff Bylaws will be placed on administrative suspension for the duration of the influenza season. Administrative suspensions are not reportable to the Maryland Board of Physicians or the National Physician Data Base (NPDB).

4. Trainees, students, residents, or fellows who fail to comply with the requirement of this policy will become ineligible to continue in their respective training programs at Suburban Hospital.

RESPONSIBILITIES

Any individual covered by this policy: Responsibility to receive influenza vaccination by the stated deadline or to complete the designated process for a permissible exception. Wear mask as outlined above if granted exception.

JHHS HEIC Establish annual vaccination requirements, define the influenza season

Human Resources Disseminate policy to staff and volunteers, answer questions related to this policy, accept and evaluate requests for religious accommodations.

Occupational Health Services Administer and track vaccinations, accept and evaluate requests for medical exceptions.
Supervisors and Managers
Ensure that individuals covered by this policy are vaccinated against influenza each year unless exception has been granted as described in this policy.

Medical Staff Office
Disseminate information to medical staff regarding policy requirements. Track compliance among medical staff and notify Vice President for Medical Affairs and Chair of the Medical Staff regarding administrative suspensions.

EVALUATION

Suburban Hospital will evaluate organizational vaccination rates, frequency and reasons for vaccine declinations monthly between September and January. This information will be reported to organizational management and JHHS HEIC. Suburban Hospital management and JHHS HEIC will receive lists of non-compliant personnel by the December designated deadline.

The Department of Human Resources will evaluate the frequency of religious accommodations monthly between September and January. This information will be reported to organizational management and JHHS HEIC.

DISSEMINATION

This policy will be disseminated by:
1. Management Communications Forum and training sessions
2. In-services and Grand Rounds
3. Johns Hopkins Medicine and Suburban Hospital Intranet site and publications
4. Committee and subsection Meetings
5. New employee orientation
6. Newsletters
7. E-mail blasts
8. Medical Staff applications and reapplications
9. Town Meetings

REFERENCES

http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/mm60e0818a1.htm?sp=mm60e0818a1_e&source=govdelivery
http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/pdf/wk/mm60e0818.pdf.


**SPONSOR**

Human Resources, Employee/Occupational Health, Medical Staff Office

**REVIEW CYCLE**

Annual

**APPROVAL**

[Signature]

VP Human Resources

9/3/2013

Date