

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts  
Executive Office of Health and Human Services  
Department of Public Health  
250 Washington Street, Boston, MA 02108-4619

Tel: 617-624-5200  
Fax: 617-624-5206  
[www.mass.gov/dph](http://www.mass.gov/dph)

DEVAL L. PATRICK  
GOVERNOR

JOHN W. POLANOWICZ  
SECRETARY

CHERYL BARTLETT, RN  
COMMISSIONER

**Circular Letter: DHCQ 14-1-607**

**TO:** Ambulatory Surgical Center Facility Administrators  
Clinic Chief Executive Officers or Practice Managers  
Dialysis Center Chief Executive Officers  
Long Term Care Facility Administrators  
Non-Acute Hospital Chief Executive Officers

**FROM:** Madeleine Biondolillo, MD  
Associate Commissioner  
Director, Bureau of Health Care Safety and Quality

**DATE:** January 21, 2014

**RE:** Data Submission Instructions for Seasonal Influenza Vaccination of Healthcare Personnel (HCP) at Massachusetts Ambulatory Surgical Centers, Clinics, Dialysis Centers, Long Term Care Facilities and Non-Acute Hospitals for the 2013-2014 Influenza Season

As a condition of licensure, Massachusetts Department of Public Health (MDPH) regulations mandate all licensed health care facilities offer, free-of charge, annual influenza vaccine to all personnel (regular employees, contracted employees, volunteers, house staff or students); document receipt of influenza vaccine administered within and outside the facility; or document the declination of immunization.<sup>1</sup>

**Facilities are also required to report healthcare personnel influenza data annually to MDPH.**

The MDPH has established an overall minimum performance goal for all licensed facility HCP vaccination rates. Statewide, the MDPH expects that a 90% influenza vaccination coverage rate will be reached for all healthcare personnel. The goal of this policy is to advance patient safety by ensuring maximal healthcare personnel influenza vaccination coverage of those who do not have a medical contraindication.

Figure 1 depicts trends in influenza vaccination rates in non-acute care facilities in the Commonwealth from the 2010-2011 flu season to 2012-2013. Overall, facilities reported slightly improved mean vaccine coverage rates in 2012-13 when compared to 2011-12. However mean vaccine coverage in long term

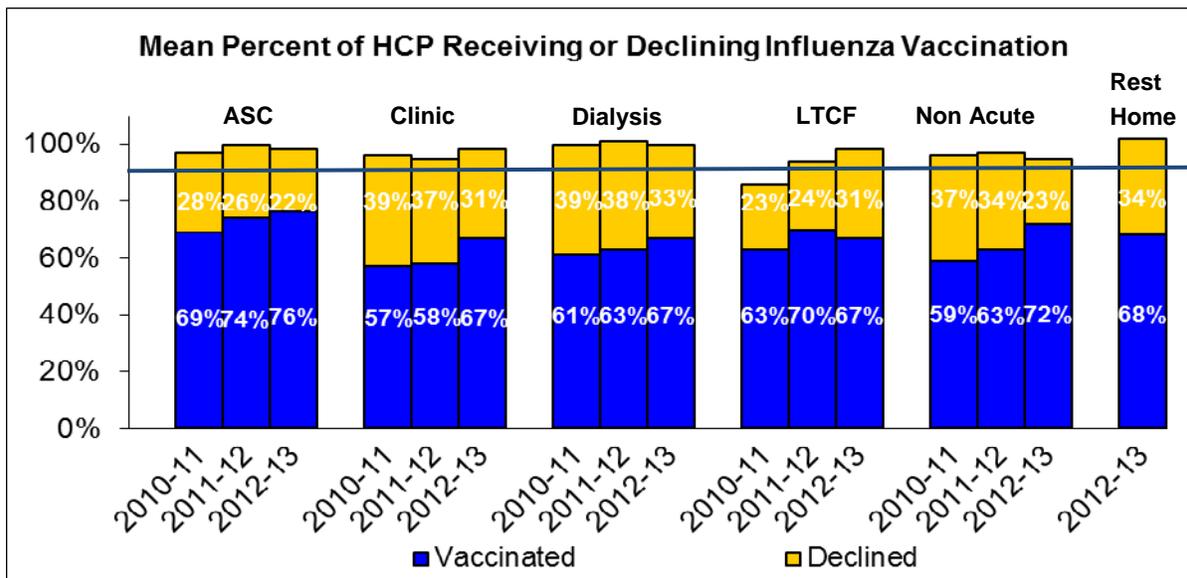
---

<sup>1</sup> 105 CMR 130.325, 105 CMR 140.150, 105 CMR 150.002(D)(8) available at <http://www.mass.gov/eohhs/gov/departments/dph/programs/hcq/healthcare-quality/regulations/public-health-regulations-healthcare-quality.html>

care facilities fell to 67% in 2012-13, down from 70% in 2011-12. No type of facility reached the 90% coverage goal set by the MDPH Division of Healthcare Quality for acute care hospitals.

Continuing to increase the rate of influenza vaccination coverage among HCP will only be achieved with significant commitment and effort. To protect the lives and welfare of patients, employees, and communities, as well as to improve quality and reduce healthcare costs, MDPH encourages all licensed healthcare facilities to implement an evidence-based vaccination initiative to achieve the established goal of vaccinating 90% of eligible HCP.

Figure 1.  
**MEAN PERCENT OF HEALTHCARE WORKERS RECEIVING AND DECLINING INFLUENZA VACCINATION: 2010-2013**



In addition to meeting the licensing requirements, the data collected during the 2013-2014 influenza season will be publicly reported, will be used to guide future policy development and to set public health priorities. To standardize and simplify data submission processes, and reduce the financial and environmental impact of printing, copying and mailing, all results must be submitted electronically. Detailed instructions for completing the MDPH 2013-2014 seasonal influenza reporting requirements for healthcare employees are available at the Division of Health Care Safety and Quality at the following link. [www.mass.gov/dph/dhcq](http://www.mass.gov/dph/dhcq) Upon reaching the website, click on the “Influenza Vaccination Reporting 2013-2014” link to access reporting requirements and data submission forms.

In accordance with regulations found at 105 CMR 153.000: LICENSURE PROCEDURE AND SUITABILITY REQUIREMENTS FOR LONG-TERM CARE FACILITIES <http://www.mass.gov/eohhs/docs/dph/regs/105cmr153.pdf>, failure to submit the required influenza data may result in a statement of deficiency against the facility to which you will be required to submit a plan of correction subject to enforcement action as warranted.

Compliance with this regulatory requirement will also be assessed during surveys currently conducted by MDPH.

**Data Reporting Methodology**

Healthcare facility specific vaccination rates will be publicly reported as a percentage. The rate is calculated by dividing the number of healthcare facility employees vaccinated (numerator) by the total of number of healthcare employees (denominator). While all personnel, including non-employee personnel, must be offered influenza vaccine, the reportable measure of effectiveness is based on employees, as defined by the payroll. To standardize the method of calculating employees for the denominator, all healthcare facilities are required to report the number of persons receiving a paycheck from the facility on December 31, 2013. The numerator rates will include both employees receiving seasonal influenza vaccination from the healthcare facility and employees receiving seasonal influenza vaccination outside the healthcare facility (i.e. private physician's office, community health center, etc.). The percentage of facility specific employee declinations will also be reported separately.

We suggest your results be shared internally with all staff, your Board of Directors and Patient and Family Advisory Council. Prevention of influenza by promoting vaccination must be an organizational priority and part of the overall institutional commitment to improvement. The successful implementation of strategies to ensure compliance is dependent on clear administrative policies and committed executive leadership.

**It is your responsibility to ensure 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, Chief Nursing Officers, Directors of Quality Improvement, and Directors of Human Resources.**

**Important Instructions for the 2013 – 2014 Influenza Season**

**Deadline for submitting the mandatory data is April 15, 2014, 5pm**

All required HCP data must be submitted to Bureau of Health Care Safety and Quality at [dhcq.fludata@state.ma.us](mailto:dhcq.fludata@state.ma.us)

**MDPH will not accept any data submitted after the April 15, 2014 deadline.**

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](mailto:dhcq.fludata@state.ma.us)

**Vaccination of healthcare personnel (HCP) has been shown to reduce influenza infection and absenteeism among HCP, protect patients and lead to reduced disease burden and healthcare costs**

Many resources are available to help health care facilities develop influenza campaigns and identify best practices for increasing healthcare personnel vaccination rates. The following non-inclusive list is provided:

- The Employee Flu Immunization Campaign Kit designed by MassPRO in collaboration with the Massachusetts Medical Society to help hospitals, nursing homes, and other health care settings protect staff and patients from influenza by increasing health care worker immunization rates. It is available at: [www.massmed.org/flu\\_kit](http://www.massmed.org/flu_kit)

- Recommendations of the Healthcare Infection Control Practices Advisory Committee (HICPAC) and the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) for vaccinating healthcare personnel against influenza are available at: <http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/PDF/rr/rr5502.pdf>
- The Joint Commission monograph entitled *Providing a Safer Environment for Health Care Personnel and Patients Through Influenza Vaccination* available at: [http://www.jointcommission.org/Providing\\_a\\_Safer\\_Environment/](http://www.jointcommission.org/Providing_a_Safer_Environment/)
- *Improving Influenza Vaccination Rates in Health Care Workers Strategies to Increase Protection for Workers and Patients* is available from the National Foundation for Infectious Diseases at: <http://www.nfid.org/pdf/publications/hcwmonograph.pdf>
- The Association for Professionals in Infection Control and Epidemiology provides a toolkit at: [http://www.apic.org/Content/NavigationMenu/PracticeGuidance/Topics/Influenza/toolkit\\_content\\_s.htm](http://www.apic.org/Content/NavigationMenu/PracticeGuidance/Topics/Influenza/toolkit_content_s.htm)
- The National Influenza Vaccine Summit website with information on best practices for maximizing influenza vaccination rates among healthcare workers at: [http://www.preventinfluenza.org/profs\\_workers.asp](http://www.preventinfluenza.org/profs_workers.asp)

The Massachusetts Department of Public Health website provides information, clinical advisories and guidance for healthcare professionals on the prevention and treatment of influenza.  
<http://www.mass.gov/eohhs/provider/guidelines-resources/services-planning/diseases-conditions/influenza/information-for-healthcare-and-public-health.html>

CC: Cheryl Bartlett, RN, Commissioner,  
 Alfred DeMaria, Jr., MD, Medical Director, Bureau of Infectious Disease