

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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**Circular Letter: DHCQ 15-3-631**

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

FROM: Deborah S. Allwes, BS, BSN, MPH *DSA*  
 Director, Bureau of Health Care Safety and Quality

DATE: March 17, 2015

RE: Seasonal Influenza Vaccination of Healthcare Personnel at Massachusetts Clinics,  
 Dialysis Centers, Long Term Care Facilities and Non-Acute Hospitals for the 2014-2015  
 Influenza Season

The purpose of this circular letter is to inform Massachusetts Clinics, Dialysis Centers, Long Term Care Facilities, Non-Acute Hospitals, and Rest Homes of the steps needed to fulfill the Massachusetts Department of Public Health (MDPH) requirement to submit annual Healthcare Personnel (HCP) influenza data to MDPH by April 15, 2015.

**Please note Ambulatory Surgical Centers (ASC) that participate in the Centers for Medicaid Services Quality Reporting (ASCQR) Program must report summary counts of healthcare personnel influenza vaccination to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s National Healthcare Safety Network. Please see circular letter # 15-3-63 dated March 17, 2015.**

**Background**

As a condition of licensure, MDPH regulations require all licensed healthcare facilities to:

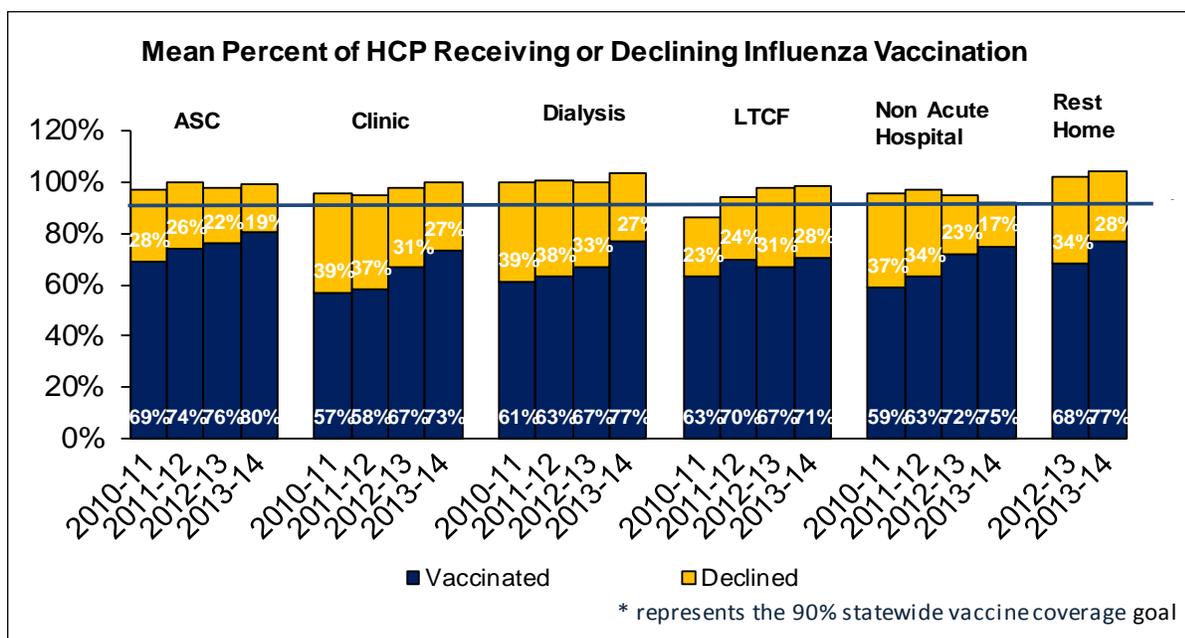
- Offer free-of-charge, annual influenza vaccine to all personnel (full and part-time employees, contracted employees, volunteers, house staff and students);
- Document receipt of influenza vaccine administered within and outside the facility or document the declination of immunization; and

- Report information to MDPH documenting compliance with the vaccination requirement, in accordance with reporting and data collection guidelines of the Commissioner (105 CMR.)<sup>1</sup>

The MDPH has established an overall minimum performance goal for all licensed facility HCP influenza vaccination rates. Statewide, MDPH expects that a 90% influenza vaccination coverage rate will be reached for all HCP. During the 2013-2014 influenza season, Massachusetts HCP did not achieve vaccine coverage of 90%.

Figure 1 depicts trends in influenza vaccination rates in non-acute care facilities in Massachusetts from the 2010-2011 flu season to the 2013-2014 season. Overall, facilities reported slightly improved mean vaccine coverage rates in 2013-2014 when compared to 2012-2013. However, no facility type reached the 90% coverage goal set by MDPH Bureau of Health Care Safety and Quality.

Figure 1.



MDPH considers the prevention of influenza by promoting vaccination to be an organizational priority and that it should be 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. 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.

Long-term care facilities should note that in accordance with regulations found at 105 CMR 153.000: Licensure Procedure And Suitability Requirements For Long-Term Care Facilities, 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.

<sup>1</sup>105 CMR 130.325, 105 CMR 140.150, 105 CMR 150.002(D)(8). The requirements under 105 CMR 140.150 apply to dialysis centers licensed under 105 CMR 145.000 pursuant to 105 CMR 145.900.

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

### **Reporting Healthcare Personnel Influenza Vaccination Data**

Detailed instructions for completing the MDPH 2014-2015 seasonal influenza reporting requirements for HCP are available at the Bureau 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 2014-2015” link to access reporting requirements and data submission forms

#### **Important Instructions for the 2014-2015 Influenza Season**

**Deadline for submitting the mandatory data is April 15, 2015, 5pm**

All required HCP influenza data must be submitted to the 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, 2015 deadline.**

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

Seasonal influenza vaccination is an effective method of preventing influenza virus infection and its potentially serious complications. MDPH 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](mailto:dhcq.fludata@state.ma.us).

### **References and Resources**

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

Seasonal Influenza (Flu)  
[www.cdc.gov/flu/](http://www.cdc.gov/flu/)

Seasonal Influenza: Flu Basics  
[www.cdc.gov/flu/about/disease/index.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/flu/about/disease/index.htm)

Information for Health Professionals  
[www.cdc.gov/flu/professionals/index.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/flu/professionals/index.htm)

MMWR- Prevention and Control of Seasonal Influenza with Vaccines: Recommendations of the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP)-United States, 2014–15 Influenza Season  
[www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/mm6332a3.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/mm6332a3.htm)

Influenza Training

[www.cdc.gov/flu/professionals/training/index.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/flu/professionals/training/index.htm)

Influenza Infection Control in Health Care Facilities

[www.cdc.gov/flu/professionals/infectioncontrol/index.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/flu/professionals/infectioncontrol/index.htm)

Seasonal Influenza (Flu)-Free Resources

[www.cdc.gov/flu/freeresources/index.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/flu/freeresources/index.htm)

Seasonal Influenza (Flu)-Information for Businesses & Employers

[www.cdc.gov/flu/business/](http://www.cdc.gov/flu/business/)

Influenza Vaccination of Health-Care Personnel

[www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/rr5502a1.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/rr5502a1.htm)

Healthcare Personnel Immunization

[www.apic.org/Professional-Practice/Practice-Resources/Healthcare-Immunization](http://www.apic.org/Professional-Practice/Practice-Resources/Healthcare-Immunization)

Providing a Safer Environment for Health Care Personnel and Patients through Influenza Vaccination-Strategies from Research and Practice

[www.jointcommission.org/assets/1/18/flu\\_monograph.pdf](http://www.jointcommission.org/assets/1/18/flu_monograph.pdf)

Strategies for Improving Health Care Personnel Influenza Vaccination Rates

[www.jointcommission.org/topics/hai\\_influenza.aspx](http://www.jointcommission.org/topics/hai_influenza.aspx)

HHS Prevention Strategies-Health Care-Associated Infections

[www.health.gov/hai/prevent\\_hai.asp](http://www.health.gov/hai/prevent_hai.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: Monica Bharel MD, MPH, Commissioner, Department of Public Health  
Alfred DeMaria, Jr., MD, Medical Director, Bureau of Infectious Diseases