

# **MANDATORY INFLUENZA VACCINATION POLICY FOR SPECIFIC STATE PERSONNEL**

## **I. PURPOSE**

To outline the State of South Dakota policy regarding influenza vaccination and to implement a mandatory influenza vaccination policy for all state personnel providing direct healthcare services, who are in regular contact with vulnerable populations, or who have a role in responding to disease outbreaks.

As an employer, it is important for the State of South Dakota to be a leader in this area by ensuring compliance with recognized standards for influenza vaccination.

## **II. REFERENCES**

State of South Dakota, Executive Order 2014-11  
(effective September 1, 2014)  
Centers for Disease Prevention and Control (CDC)  
Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP)  
American Academy of Family Physicians  
American Hospital Association  
American Pharmacists Association  
American Public Health Association  
Association for Professionals in Infection Control and Epidemiology  
National Patient Safety Foundation  
Society for Healthcare Epidemiology of America  
American Nurses Association  
American Medical Association

## **III. POLICY STATEMENT:**

The severity of an influenza season varies from year to year. It is impossible to predict in advance the severity of influenza in any one season. Vaccination of healthcare personnel and personnel working with vulnerable populations serves to:

- 1) Prevent transmission of influenza to patients, especially children and those with compromised immune systems;
- 2) Reduce the risk of personnel becoming infected with influenza;
- 3) Create "herd immunity" to protect both personnel and patients or clients who are unable to receive vaccine;
- 4) Maintain a critical workforce during disease outbreaks;
- 5) Prevent taking healthcare-acquired influenza home to their families; and
- 6) Set an example of the importance of vaccination for every person.

## **IV. POLICY SCOPE:**

### **1) Seasonal Influenza (Flu)**

In the U.S., flu activity most commonly peaks between December and March. However, seasonal flu activity can begin as early as October and continue to occur as late as May. The Centers for Disease Prevention and Control (CDC) partners with state, local, and territorial health departments, public health and clinical laboratories, vital statistics offices, healthcare providers, clinics, and emergency departments to provide the national influenza surveillance system. Information collected allows the CDC and the South Dakota Department of Health (SD DOH) to determine when and where influenza activity is occurring. Influenza activity is typically categorized to be at one of the following levels: no activity, sporadic, local, regional or widespread activity.

Each year, the CDC and SD DOH provide guidance on the upcoming seasonal influenza through the department's influenza communication plan, which includes: press releases, FAQs, etc. The SD DOH continuously evaluates South Dakota's influenza activity, reports the activity weekly to the CDC, and posts the activity on the SD DOH website.

For purposes of this policy, the influenza season begins when the influenza activity is categorized as "local" or higher by the CDC and the SD DOH. The SD DOH will notify the South Dakota Bureau of Human Resources (BHR) when the influenza activity reaches the "local" level. BHR will then notify each agency that the influenza season has begun.

The influenza season will end when the influenza activity is categorized as "sporadic" or lower by the CDC and the SD DOH. The BHR will collaborate with the SD DOH to monitor influenza activity and determine when to notify employees

that the influenza activity has reached the “sporadic” level. BHR will then notify each agency that the influenza season has ended.

NOTE: Because the influenza season is based upon the influenza activity, it may be possible for more than one influenza outbreak in a given year. This policy applies to all influenza seasons and outbreaks as determined by the CDC, SD DOH, and this policy.

## 2) **State Personnel Requirement**

All state personnel who meet the following criteria are required to be vaccinated against influenza each year. This policy applies to:

- a. All state-employed personnel in state institutions including:
  - i. The Human Services Center in Yankton,
  - ii. The South Dakota Developmental Center in Redfield,
  - iii. The South Dakota Veterans Home in Hot Springs, and
  - iv. The State Public Health Laboratory in Pierre;
- b. All state-employed personnel providing direct health care services to an inmate, client or patient in a clinic, office, home, or other setting, or any state-employed personnel whose routine work duties brings them into direct contact with a client or patient in a patient or client care area; and
- c. All state-employed personnel entering a licensed healthcare facility on a routine basis as part of their job responsibilities.

Other state agencies may choose to develop agency specific policies to ensure their “essential personnel” are vaccinated.

## **V. POLICY IMPLEMENTATION:**

- 1) All state-employed personnel described in Section IV of this policy, are required to receive an influenza vaccination as soon as possible, but no later than December 1 each year.
  - a. Influenza vaccinations will be offered at no cost to personnel.
  - b. Personnel need to receive an influenza vaccination or show documented proof of immunization from a healthcare provider.
  - c. Newly hired personnel will receive an influenza vaccination at the time of hire or show documented proof of influenza vaccination unless medical or religious exemption. (See Subsections 3 & 4 below)
- 2) Each state agency will ensure all contract staff, vendors, students, supervising faculty, or volunteers providing service in any setting described in Section IV of this policy, provide documentation of vaccination or complete the Exemption of Influenza Vaccination Form and provide to the state agency for approval.
- 3) Exemptions to the influenza vaccination requirement will be provided to any person who:
  - a. Has a physician signed, documented medical contraindication to the influenza vaccination; or
  - b. Adheres to a religious doctrine whose teachings are opposed to immunizations.
- 4) State-employed personnel desiring an exemption for medical (documentation required) or religious reasons must complete the Exemption of Influenza Vaccination Form. The completed form must be received by the employee's supervisor no later than October 15 of each year.
- 5) When SD DOH begins reporting the influenza activity has reached the “local, regional or widespread” level, all state-employed personnel who have not yet received their annual flu vaccination or who have completed the Exemption of Influenza Vaccination Form will be required to wear a mask when providing direct health care services. Masking shall continue while the influenza activity is reported to be at the “local, regional or widespread” level.
- 6) BHR will address any performance issues of non-compliance pursuant to the “Disciplinary Action” rules.

### **Attachment:**

Exemption of Influenza Vaccination Form