

Statement Regarding Seasonal Influenza Vaccination For Registered Nurses and Other Health Care Personnel

STATEMENT

Registered nurses and other Health Care Personnel (HCP) can acquire or transmit influenza to patients or co-workers. Unvaccinated HCP can be a key source of outbreaks of influenza in the healthcare setting. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) reports annually that seasonal influenza causes 36,000 deaths and over 200,000 hospitalizations. Despite efforts to increase vaccination rates and provide education, the voluntary vaccination rate among HCP remains low.

PROPOSED ACTION

Whereas, seasonal influenza is a serious illness with high rates of mortality and morbidity,

Whereas, seasonal influenza is a vaccine preventable disease,

Whereas, seasonal influenza vaccination rates of HCP is unacceptably low at less than 40% annually,

Whereas, efforts to increase vaccination rates through education have failed to increase seasonal influenza vaccination rates of HCP,

Whereas, it has been documented that unvaccinated HCP are a key cause in seasonal influenza outbreaks in healthcare settings,

Whereas, annual influenza vaccination of HCP is a patient care safety issue as well as an “ethical responsibility,”

Whereas, HCP can acquire seasonal influenza from their patients and co-workers, becoming ill and needing time off work to recover, which stresses healthcare staffing amidst the nursing shortage,

Whereas, in one recent study of HCP 59% of those that tested positive could not recall having influenza and 28% could not recall any respiratory infection,

Whereas, the CDC’s Healthcare Infection Control Practices Advisory Committee and Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices has recommended since 1981 that all HCP be vaccinated annually against influenza (www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/rr5502a1.htm),

Whereas, the Joint Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations approved and communicated on June 13, 2006, an infection control standard that requires

accredited organizations to offer annual influenza vaccinations to staff, which includes volunteers and licensed independent practitioners with close patient contact. The standard became an accreditation standard beginning January 1, 2007, for the Critical Access Hospital, Hospital, and Long Term Care accreditation programs (www.jointcommission.org/NewsRoom/NewsReleases/nr_06_13_06.htm).

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED,

That the Michigan Nurses Association (MNA) supports implementation of comprehensive seasonal influenza programs for HCP that aim for 100% vaccination rates, and that also provide an “opt out” with the completion of an informed declination form, and

Such programs should be implemented consistent with registered nurses’ legal rights including rights under labor laws, and

MNA encourages health care organizations to provide annual influenza vaccination to HCP at no charge at convenient times and locations.

MNA, the voice for the 124,000 registered nurses in Michigan, should join with other health care organizations to set the standard of annual influenza vaccination with an informed declination for registered nurses and other HCP.

REFERENCES

1. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), Prevention and Control of Influenza: Recommendations of the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP). Morbidity & Mortality Weekly Report (MMWR), 2007; 56 (No. RR-6)
2. Joint Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations (JCAHO), Joint Commission Establishes Infection Control Standard to Address Influenza Vaccines for Staff: News Release. Infection Control Standard, June 13, 2006; IC.4.15.
3. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), Influenza Vaccination of Health Care Personnel: Recommendations of the Healthcare Infection Control Practices Advisory Committee (HICPAC) and the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP), Morbidity & Mortality Weekly Report (MMWR), 2006; 55 (No. RR-2)
4. Epidemiology and Prevention of Vaccine Preventable Diseases, 10th Edition, January, 2007, CDC
5. Michigan Department of Community Health (MDCH) Flu Fighter Action Kit for Health Care Personnel, http://www.michigan.gov/mdch/0,1607,7-132-2940_2955_22779_40563_47128--,00.html