September 3, 2015

Dear Administrators, Directors of Nursing, and Infection Control Providers for San Francisco Skilled Nursing Facilities,

Attached please find the Health Officer Order for influenza vaccination or masking for the 2015-16 influenza season. As you know, the San Francisco Department of Public Health (SFDPH) issues its “masking memo” each year before the start of influenza season. This Health Officer Order mandates that hospitals and skilled nursing facilities require that health care workers (HCWs) receive an annual influenza vaccination or, if they decline, wear a mask in patient care areas during the influenza season. As you also know, the CalOSHA Aerosol Transmissible Diseases Standard (ATD Standard) mandates that skilled nursing facilities make influenza vaccine available to all employees with potential occupational exposure to seasonal influenza.

The goal of these two mandates is to prevent influenza infections and outbreaks among residents of skilled nursing facilities and the staff caring for them. Thank you for all your efforts to comply with these requirements and create a safe and healthy environment for your residents and staff. SFDPH would like to support you as you continue to work to prevent influenza outbreaks and increase immunization coverage for your staff; as part of this effort, we will be reaching out to a group of San Francisco skilled nursing facilities in the next few months to offer technical assistance and education concerning influenza outbreak prevention.

We would like to assist our local skilled nursing facilities in improving staff influenza immunization rates. **Beginning next year in the 2016-17 flu season, SFDPH will request that each San Francisco skilled nursing facility report its health care worker immunization data to the Communicable Disease program.** We will share a suggested reporting template with you before the start of the 2016-17 flu season. We expect the template to be based on the CDC/National Health Safety Network (NHSN) influenza vaccination measure discussed here: [http://www.cdc.gov/flu/toolkit/long-term-care/reporting.htm](http://www.cdc.gov/flu/toolkit/long-term-care/reporting.htm) We will provide additional instructions and guidance next year.

Even though reporting will be on a voluntary basis, we suggest that you develop a tracking program that reliably identifies workers for whom vaccination is required to be offered and records vaccinations received and declinations. You can also begin using the NHSN framework this year if it is helpful.

If you suspect an outbreak of influenza at your facility, please call the SFDPH Communicable Disease Control Unit right away at 415-554-2830. Our staff can offer you guidance concerning management of the outbreak so that it can be controlled as rapidly as possible.

Thank you very much for your attention,

[Signature]

Dr. Cora Hoover
Director, Communicable Disease Control and Prevention, SFDPH
Resources:
CDC definition of health care workers: “Health care workers include (but are not limited to) physicians, nurses, nursing assistants, therapists, technicians, emergency medical service personnel, dental personnel, pharmacists, laboratory personnel, autopsy personnel, students and trainees, contractual staff not employed by the health-care facility, and persons (e.g., clerical, dietary, housekeeping, laundry, security, maintenance, administrative, billing, and volunteers) not directly involved in patient care but potentially exposed to infectious agents that can be transmitted to and from health care workers and patients.” See http://www.cdc.gov/flu/healthcareworkers.htm

CDC/NHSN Healthcare Provider Influenza Vaccination Surveillance information
http://www.cdc.gov/nhsn/ltach/vaccination/index.html

CDC Toolkit: Increasing Influenza Vaccination among Healthcare Personnel in Long-term Care Settings

CDC Interim Guidance for Influenza Outbreak Management in Long-term Care Facilities
http://www.cdc.gov/flu/professionals/infectioncontrol/ltc-facility-guidance.htm

California Department of Public Health Recommendations for the Prevention and Control of Influenza in California Long-term Care Facilities

SFDPH Influenza Guidance for Long-term Care Facilities
http://www.sfcdcp.org/influenzareporting.html