

Public Health Brief

A Newsletter on Current Public
Health Topics



Serving Adams, Arapahoe and Douglas Counties

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You have received this message based upon the information contained within our Health Alert Network Notification System. If you have a different or additional e-mail or fax address that you would like us to use or if you have additional questions, please call 720-200-1477.

Categories of Health Alert Network Messages:

Health Alert: Conveys the highest level of importance; warrants immediate action or attention.

Health Advisory: Provides important information for a specific incident or situation; may not require immediate action.

Health Update: Provides updated information regarding an incident or situation; unlikely to require immediate action.

Info Service/Public Health Brief: Provides general information that is not necessarily considered to be of an emergent nature.

You may download a copy of this HAN from the TCHD website at
<http://www.tchd.org/259/Health-Alert-Network>



September 2015

Dear Colleagues:

The 2015-2016 influenza season will start soon in the United States. I am writing as a reminder about the importance of influenza prevention among health care workers. Healthcare worker (HCW) immunization plays a key role in community influenza control and prevention of healthcare-associated transmission and has been recommended by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) for over 30 years. Vaccination of healthcare workers:

- Reduces infection and absenteeism among staff,
- Prevents morbidity and mortality in their patients, and
- Results in financial savings to sponsoring health institutions.

To encourage HCW immunization, in 2012 the Colorado Board of Health passed Rule 6 CCR 1011 Chapter 02¹ regarding influenza vaccination of employees in licensed health care facilities. As part of this rule, **all health care facilities licensed by the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment (CDPHE) are required to track the number of their employees, licensed practitioners, and students/trainees that are vaccinated against influenza and report this data to CDPHE every year.** The target HCW immunization rate is 90%. The Board of Health rule also outlines specific requirements facilities must meet in addition to reporting vaccination rates, including policies, staff assessment, and more.

Beginning in 2016, CDPHE will publish an annual report with information about individual facilities, specifically whether or not they reported and their influenza vaccination rate.

The online portal used to submit information and the submission deadline vary depending on the type of facility.

- Facilities that participate in CMS reimbursement programs or report certain healthcare associated infections required by the state must use the National Healthcare Safety Network (NHSN) portal². This includes hospitals, ambulatory surgical centers, dialysis facilities, and psychiatric hospitals. Data on immunization rates should be collected from October 31st to March 31st and data must be reported by May 15th, 2016.
- All other facilities should use the state portal³. Data on immunization rates should be collected from October 31st to December 31st and data must be reported by March 31st, 2016.

For assistance reporting influenza vaccination rates, please contact CDPHE via the numbers provided in the footnotes. For assistance in providing immunizations to employees, contact Kaitlin Wolff at Tri-County Health Department, 303-336-3036 or kwolff@tchd.org. In addition, vaccine information for the 2015-2016 influenza season is available at: <http://www.cdc.gov/flu/about/season/flu-season-2015-2016.htm>.

Given the ongoing importance of influenza as a major cause of morbidity and mortality, we encourage all healthcare facilities in Adams, Arapahoe, and Douglas Counties to make immunization of HCWs and reporting on immunization rates to CDPHE a high institutional priority. Thank you for your ongoing efforts to keep your staff and patients and our wider communities safe and healthy.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "John M. Douglas, Jr., M.D.", written over a light blue horizontal line.

John M. Douglas, Jr., M.D.
Executive Director

1 Board of Health Rule: <http://origin.library.constantcontact.com/download/get/file/1103699264529-276/Part+10+excerpt+regarding+BOH+rule.pdf>

2 Annual Reporting of Flu Vaccination Data for National Health Safety Network Portal (NHSN):
NHSN Help Desk - nhsn@cdc.gov or call Tamara Hoxworth at 303-692-2930.

3 Annual Reporting of Flu Vaccination Data for State Portal: www.cohfportal-egov.com or <https://www.hfemsd4.dphe.state.co.us/hfportal/hfstart.aspx>. Each facility has a portal administrator with a user name and password; If not known, call CDPHE's Licensure Customer Assistance at 303-692-2836.