



## **Wheeling-Ohio County Health Department**

### **WHEELING-OHIO COUNTY BOARD OF HEALTH RESOLUTION INFLUENZA IMMUNIZATION OF HEALTH CARE WORKERS**

WHEREAS, influenza is a contagious respiratory illness that is spread very efficiently and rapidly from person-to-person in health care facilities, and it is a serious disease that can lead to serious life-threatening complications;

WHEREAS, unvaccinated health care workers (HCWs) can potentially expose high-risk patients to influenza in a health care facility or could perpetuate an outbreak of disease, and unvaccinated HCWs may work while infected with influenza virus in part because they might not realize that they can be asymptomatic but still infectious;

WHEREAS, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention have stated that fewer than half of HCWs report getting an annual flu vaccine;

WHEREAS, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) first recommended annual influenza vaccination for all HCWs in its 1997 Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP) statement, stating that influenza vaccination is the primary method for preventing influenza and its severe complications;

WHEREAS, as a HCW, by getting vaccinated, you can help protect your family at home as well as your patients at work from getting sick;

WHEREAS, influenza outbreaks in hospitals and long-term care facilities have been attributed to low vaccination rates among health care professionals. Studies have shown that higher vaccination rates among HCWs can reduce influenza-like illness, and even deaths, in settings like nursing homes;

WHEREAS, HCWs play an important role in protecting public health, and your co-workers need you to be healthy and able to cover your shift. A yearly flu vaccine can help ensure your time off is spent doing what you want to do, not staying at home sick;

WHEREAS, HCWs may care for or live with people at high risk for influenza-related complications, it is especially important for them to get vaccinated annually. Influenza vaccination of HCWs can reduce morbidity and mortality among geriatric patients in long-term care facilities;

WHEREAS, transmission of influenza among HCWs causes absenteeism and disruption to the continuity and quality of care, and impairs health care facility preparedness for patient care in the event of large outbreaks of influenza or other communicable diseases;

WHEREAS, influenza vaccination has been found to be cost effective, economical and has been linked to improved patient outcomes and reduced absenteeism and influenza infection among staff;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Wheeling-Ohio County Board of Health strongly recommends annual influenza vaccination for all HCWs to prevent transmission of influenza;

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that Wheeling-Ohio County Board of Health encourages all health care organizations to adopt policies that require annual seasonal influenza vaccinations for employees and appropriate exemptions for those not eligible for vaccination.

***Approved & Adopted by the Board of Health  
September 10, 2013***

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