



MARK B HORTON, MD, MSPH
Director

State of California—Health and Human Services Agency
California Department of Public Health



ARNOLD SCHWARZENEGGER
Governor

November 12, 2009

TO: All Facilities

SUBJECT: H1N1 Vaccine

It is anticipated that the Novel H1N1 virus will significantly strain the health care delivery system due to the large number of people who will become ill and seek care. In addition to a surge in patients, there could be a concurrent decline in the number of health care employees available to care for them due to their own illness or that of their family members. In recognition of the threat this virus poses, on October 23, 2009 the President of the United States signed a declaration pursuant to the National Emergencies Act regarding the 2009-H1N1 influenza pandemic.

Health and Safety Code (HSC) section 1288.7(a) provides that each General Acute Care Hospital (GACH) licensed pursuant to HSC Section 1250 must annually offer onsite influenza vaccinations, upon availability, to all hospital employees at no cost to the employee. That HSC section mandates that each GACH must require its employees to be vaccinated, or, if the employee elects not to be vaccinated, to obtain a written declaration that the employee declined the vaccination. HSC section 1288.7(a) applies to the newly developed Novel H1N1 vaccine. The Novel H1N1 vaccination is mandated to be offered by all GACHs, in addition to the seasonal influenza vaccination.

Due to the anticipated extensive spread and the severity of the illness caused by this virus, and in an effort to maintain the workforce and reduce the likelihood of healthcare workers transmitting the virus to patients, the California Department of Public Health (CDPH) recommends all other facility types to offer the Novel H1N1 vaccine to all of their employees free of charge. CDPH also asks that facilities maintain written records of the employees who have received the vaccination, and requests that facilities obtain written declinations from any employee who chooses not to be vaccinated.

We at CDPH are confident that the health care community shares our goal of protecting the health and safety of all the people who rely on our licensed facilities for care. An immunized health care workforce is critical to that goal.

Sincerely,

Original Signed by Mark B. Horton, MD, MSPH

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