



THE ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

1200 DEFENSE PENTAGON
WASHINGTON, DC 20301-1200

28 Jul 2011

HEALTH AFFAIRS

MEMORANDUM FOR ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF THE ARMY (MANPOWER AND
RESERVE AFFAIRS)
ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF THE NAVY (MANPOWER AND
RESERVE AFFAIRS)
ASSISTANT SECRETARY OF THE AIR FORCE (MANPOWER
AND RESERVE AFFAIRS)
DIRECTOR, JOINT STAFF
COMMANDER, JOINT TASK FORCE, NATIONAL CAPITAL
REGION MEDICAL

SUBJECT: Addition of Pandemic Influenza Vaccine or Novel Influenza Vaccine to the Policy for Mandatory Seasonal Influenza Immunization for Civilian Health Care Personnel who Provide Direct Patient Care in Department of Defense Military Treatment Facilities

Based on the recommendations of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP), the then Armed Forces Epidemiological Board, and the Joint Preventive Medicine Policy Group, the Department of Defense (DoD) instituted a policy for the mandatory annual vaccination with seasonal influenza vaccine of civilian health care workers who provide direct patient care in DoD Military Treatment Facilities (MTFs) (Health Affairs Policy 08-005, dated April 4, 2008).

At that time, pandemic influenza response plans were still being developed based on the potential threat of an Avian influenza (H5N1) pandemic. Although a Food and Drug Administration (FDA)-approved pre-pandemic vaccine existed, the lack of sustained transmission of H5N1 precluded its use. Since then, the Influenza A (H1N1) influenza outbreak occurred with the declaration of a pandemic in June 2009, and the development and production of an FDA-approved and CDC/ACIP-recommended novel H1N1 vaccine to prevent infections from the pandemic H1N1 novel influenza strain.

Patient safety in our health care facilities remains a top priority for the Military Health System. During the annual influenza season or during an influenza outbreak due to a novel or pandemic influenza strain, vaccination with influenza vaccines (seasonal, pandemic, and/or novel) is still the primary method of minimizing the transmission of infections between health care personnel and patients, as well as the main method for minimizing lost work days for critical health care staff. Therefore, the Military Departments and MTF commanders shall add any FDA-approved and CDC/ACIP-recommended pandemic and/or novel influenza vaccine to the previous mandatory seasonal influenza vaccination policy for civilian health care personnel who provide direct patient care in DoD MTFs, and include immunizations with these vaccines in their negotiations with local unions.

The following are reiterated as reminders:

1) Local bargaining obligations will need to be satisfied prior to full implementation of these additional requirements. Contact your servicing labor relations professional for additional guidance on these matters.

2) For Health Care Providers (HCPs) working under contract to any component of DoD, influenza immunization may be provided by the MTF, according to terms of the contract. Otherwise, contractors will provide influenza immunization to their employees.

3) The Military Departments will ensure that all immunizations or exemptions are documented in the worker's health record and recorded in the Service's immunization tracking system, as appropriate. In addition, Services will monitor the immunization coverage rate for HCPs in their MTFs.

The point of contact for this matter is Dr. Benedict Diniega. Dr. Diniega may be reached at (703) 681-1708, or Benedict.Diniega@ha.osd.mil.

Jonathan Woodson, M.D.

cc:

Surgeon General of the Army

Surgeon General of the Navy

Surgeon General of the Air Force

Surgeon, Joint Staff

Director, Marine Corps Staff

Director of Health and Safety, U.S. Coast Guard

Director, Civilian Personnel Management Service, Office of the
Secretary of Defense

Director, Military Vaccine Agency

Defense Supply Center Philadelphia (Attn: Chief, Pharmaceuticals)

Deputy Director, TRICARE Management Activity