



COMMUNITY HEALTH PROGRAMS

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To: CHP Community

From: Chris Sprowl, Interim CMO

Date: Sept 1, 2020

Re: Influenza Vaccination for Children in Massachusetts, School Year 2020-2021

A word about exemptions for children from flu vaccination

CHP continues to support the immunization and vaccination of children to prevent communicable infectious diseases. In the time of the COVID-19 pandemic it is even more important to protect patients and families from preventable diseases, including COVID-19, influenza, and measles, by any means including vaccination.

The Massachusetts Department of Public Health has mandated that influenza immunization will be required for all children 6 months of age or older who are attending Massachusetts child care, pre-school, kindergarten, K-12, and colleges and universities. Students will be expected to have received a flu vaccine by December 31, 2020 for the 2020-2021 influenza season, unless either a medical or religious exemption is provided. This new flu immunization requirement to enter school in January is in addition to existing vaccine requirements for all those attending child care, preschool, K-12, and colleges and universities in Massachusetts. Elementary and secondary students who are using a remote education model through their school district are not exempt.

CHP supports this policy. Further, the American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) continues to support influenza vaccination for all people 6 months of age and older without contraindications. Per the AAP, any licensed, age-appropriate vaccine is acceptable, and everyone 6 months and older should be vaccinated.

With regard to medical exemption from flu vaccination [using injectable influenza vaccine](#), only one condition will exempt any person 6 months of age or older from receiving the injected version of the vaccine: demonstrated severe (life threatening) allergic reaction to a prior dose of the vaccine or to one of its components. Even people with egg allergies that are not life threatening may receive the vaccine according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Therefore the clinicians of CHP will not be providing medical exemption from flu vaccine except for those patients who have experienced, or can demonstrate, a history of life-threatening allergic reaction to the vaccine or one of its components.

For more information:

<https://www.mass.gov/news/flu-vaccine-now-required-for-all-massachusetts-school-students-enrolled-in-child-care-pre>)

<https://www.aap.org/en-us/advocacy-and-policy/aap-health-initiatives/Pages/What's-the-Latest-with-the-Flu.aspx>

(https://www.cdc.gov/flu/professionals/vaccination/vaccine_safety.htm)