

INFORMATION ABOUT THE NEW INFLUENZA VACCINATION POLICY

The University of Wisconsin School of Medicine and Public Health (SMPH), as part of UW Health, is committed to being a national leader in health care. To ensure the highest quality of care, all staff and providers need to be effective role models for our patients. This year (2012) there are significant changes to the influenza (flu) vaccine policy.

A summary of these changes follows:

Effective with the upcoming 2012 flu season, all SMPH staff and faculty, students, volunteers with direct patient contact and other affiliated individuals will be required to receive an influenza vaccination. Only those with a completed [medical waiver](#) for a medical contraindication or [religious conviction waiver](#) will be exempt from receiving the vaccine.

To better understand the policy changes and requirements, please carefully read the following:

Annual Influenza Vaccination

The CDC has been recommending for several years annual influenza vaccination of all health care professionals and persons in training for health-care professions, including physicians, nurses, other workers in both hospital and outpatient-care settings, and students in these professions who will have contact with patients. The CDC considers annual vaccination one measure of a patient safety quality program and, as such, endorses a coverage goal of 100% of employees who do not have a medical contraindication or a religious exemption.

Effective with the upcoming 2012 flu season, all UW Hospital and Clinics, UW Medical Foundation and UW School of Medicine and Public Health employees, faculty, students, volunteers and other affiliated individuals will be required to receive an annual influenza vaccination.

School of Medicine and Public Health employees may choose to receive the vaccine from their own health provider, campus flu clinics, or other community based flu vaccination programs, but must provide documentation of the vaccine to the SMPH Dean's Office Human Resources department by December 1 of each year. Information on campus flu clinics can be found at <http://www.uhs.wisc.edu/campus-health/uw-flu-shots.shtml>. If you do not have health insurance and are unable to afford the vaccine, please contact your department HR staff for assistance.

Only those with a completed [medical waiver](#) for a medical contraindication **or** [religious conviction waiver](#) will be exempt from receiving the vaccine. Waivers will be considered confidential medical information and not shared with departments or supervisors. Employees who are exempt from receiving a vaccine should wear a mask when within three (3) feet of patients in patient care areas when there is the presence of influenza in the community. Individuals who do not receive a vaccination or submit a valid waiver by December 1st will be considered out of compliance with this policy and disciplinary action as outlined in the applicable university policy will be pursued.

SMPH is joining multiple other healthcare organizations, both locally and nationally, in this quality, safety initiative with the intent of protecting patients and staff and supporting the commitment to preventive health.

Please visit the sites below for further information regarding the flu vaccine. Questions can be directed to SMPHFlu@med.wisc.edu.

<http://www.cdc.gov/flu/>

<http://www.cdc.gov/flu/protect/keyfacts.htm>

<http://www.cdc.gov/vaccines/Pubs/vis/downloads/vis-flu.pdf>