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| **Policy No.:** | **7120-4-10b** |
| **Approval:** | **4/16** |
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**POLICY TITLE:** **INFLUENZA PREVENTION AND MASK USE GUIDELINES**

**POLICY PURPOSE:**

Provide required expectations of healthcare workers to prevent the transmission of influenza among patients, the community and staff members as recommended by the CDC.

Promote a safe environment for our patients, community and staff members.

**Influenza Vaccination Program:**

1. University requires that all employees, contracted employees, and volunteers participate in the annual influenza vaccination program. Physicians and allied health professionals credentialed through the Medical Staff Office (MSO) provide proof of vaccination or signed declination form to the MSO. Students provide proof of vaccination via the school liaison. Vendors are responsible for providing vaccination status information to the Purchasing Department. Ambulance service personnel wear masks when they enter the ED if not vaccinated. Ambulance services are responsible for education and compliance of their staff.
2. Influenza vaccination is given free of charge to all employees, volunteers and medical staff.
3. Employee Health is responsible for the coordination of the Influenza vaccine program including informing personnel about the start date and times for vaccination. Vaccination period will be determined by Employee Health with the advice and consent of the IP department and/or Infection Prevention Committee or when the first positive test for the flu is reported by the Lab.
4. Staff is **required to be vaccinated** **or sign a declination** by **December 31**. Employees requesting an exemption from the vaccine must have the reason for the request evaluated by Employee Health for medical exemptions. All other requests are evaluated by Human Resources and or HR designee.
5. Staff and volunteers who receive the vaccine are given a sticker by Employee Health to be worn on the badge from the date of vaccination through March 31.
6. **Unvaccinated** staff and volunteers are required to wear a procedure type ear loop mask in designated areas from **the first Monday in November** through March 31, the “flu season”.
7. Places and times when masks are required to be worn by unvaccinated staff and volunteers:
   1. Locations where patient and staff interactions/exposures may occur: nursing stations, patient transport (includes elevators, if patients or other staff are present), non-public hallways accessing procedure areas, registration offices, visitor security and information desks.
   2. Job tasks that require masks, regardless of location, when patients are or may be present patient registration, case management, environmental services, volunteers, dietary services, IT maintenance in patient rooms or nursing stations, maintenance and repair of patient rooms.
   3. Any location IF the employee has dry cough, sore throat, or fever 100.0 F or greater.
   4. Unvaccinated employees with symptoms *must be relieved of duty and directed home*.
8. Areas where masks are not required:
   1. Break room/cafeteria while eating only (masks must be worn when not eating)
   2. Outside of the facility
   3. Employee entrances / exits
   4. Public hallways where exposures are unlikely or the risk is no more likely than in the community
   5. Work areas that preclude patient contact: work benches in the Lab, dark rooms, and equipment processing areas, IT, and kitchen or supply warehouses.
   6. Non-clinical or office settings, or where spatial distancing (greater than 6 feet) can be used to minimize exposures.
9. Proper mask use
   1. How to put on the mask for a secure fit:
   * Perform hand hygiene.
   * Place mask over nose, mouth and chin.
   * Fit flexible nose piece over bridge of nose.
   * Secure on head with elastic ear loops.
   * Adjust to fit.
   * *Mask must be securely fitted, covering nose, mouth and chin the entire time it is required to be worn.*
   1. How to remove the mask:
   * If wearing gloves, remove gloves prior to removing mask.
   * For ear loop masks, place a finger between the ear and the elastic.
   * Remove mask by pulling mask away from face.
   * Discard in regular waste.
   * Perform hand hygiene.
   1. General use of the mask:

Change the mask:

* + - 1. When visibly soiled, damp/humid (wet), torn or otherwise compromised or at least every 2 hours. \*See #13 for Extended use guidelines
      2. When contaminated or potentially contaminated with blood, body fluids, secretions or excretions.
      3. After leaving the room of or caring for a patient on isolation.
      4. Before performing invasive procedures, such as IV or line placement or entering an OR suite or Cath Lab, changing central line or other dressings or performing procedures that involve the central nervous system, such as an epidural or spinal tap.

During use and disposal of mask

* 1. Avoid touching the outside of the mask to prevent contamination of hands/gloves
  2. Do not reuse the mask after removal.

1. It is the responsibility of the department managers/directors to provide masks for employees required to wear them.
2. It is the responsibility of the department managers/directors to monitor for mask compliance.
3. Failure of staff members to follow the above masking guidelines is considered a safety violation. See policy A-25, Code of Conduct.
4. If supply of masks is limited due to pandemic/outbreak/national crisis, extended use of mask may be required to preserve supplies.
   1. Wear the mask for up to 8 hours
   2. Change the mask:
      1. When visibly soiled, damp/humid (wet), torn or otherwise compromised or at least every 8 hours.
      2. Follow other guidelines under 9 (c) 2-4.

**SEE RELATED DOCUMENTS:**

**Infection Prevention: Standard Precautions policy**

**Infection Prevention: Transmission-based Precautions policy**

**Infection Prevention: Type and Duration of Precautions Needed for Selected Infections / Conditions**

**Employee Health: 9680-08 Infected or Exposed Healthcare Workers**

**Infection Prevention: 7120-2-12 Barrier Attire and PPE**

***Circumstances may arise in which we find it necessary to take other steps not specifically designated here.  We reserve the right to use professional judgment to do so at our discretion.***