



# County of Fresno

## DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH

August 23, 2023

The designated influenza (flu) season for 2023-2024 is November 15, 2023, through March 31, 2024.

Influenza infection continues to account for thousands of deaths and many more hospitalizations and days of work lost each year in the U.S. Health care workers are both at risk for contracting influenza and for transmitting the virus to their vulnerable patients, and all adults and children of any age can contract severe illness related to this viral infection. This health order is issued for the purpose of minimizing influenza related illness, hospitalizations, and deaths.

### BACKGROUND

For the 2023-2024 flu season, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends flu vaccination for everyone 6 months and older with any licensed, influenza vaccine that is appropriate for the recipient's age and health status, including inactivated influenza vaccine (IIV), recombinant influenza vaccine (RIV), or live attenuated nasal spray influenza vaccine (LAIV4). For individuals 65 years of age and older, a [higher-dose flu vaccine](#) is preferentially recommended. There are [many vaccine options](#) to choose from, but the most important thing is for all people 6 months and older to get a flu vaccine this year.

The CDC estimates that from October 1, 2022, through April 30, 2023, there have been 27-54 million instances of flu illness, 12-26 million flu-related medical visits, 30,000,650,000 flu-related hospitalizations, and 19,000-58,000 flu-related deaths. Persons with chronic medical conditions, infants and children, seniors, and pregnant women are at greater risk for severe influenza-related illnesses and deaths. All Health Care Personnel (HCP) are at risk for both contracting influenza and transmitting the virus to their vulnerable patients. Patients in our healthcare facilities are especially vulnerable to influenza.

### ORDER

Pursuant to my authority under §120175 of the California Health and Safety Code, I, as the Interim Health Officer of the County of Fresno, hereby order that licensed acute care hospitals, ambulatory and community clinics, emergency medical service agencies, long-term care and skilled nursing facilities, mental health and substance use care clinics, and private physician practices in Fresno County implement a program requiring its healthcare personnel to receive an annual influenza vaccination.

Because community-wide immunization is a robust layer of protection for the most vulnerable residents of our county, health care organizations are additionally encouraged to make every effort to offer influenza vaccination to patients and families who qualify, including families of employees and staff.

I am requiring HCP to wear an orange badge/tag color to identify which staff have received their flu vaccine during the 2023-2024 influenza season, if this step is feasible. Persons with clinical documented contraindications such as prior severe allergic reaction to influenza vaccine, and those with exemptions due to strongly held personal beliefs, are exempt from this order; for all others, voluntary compliance is encouraged. For those HCP that are not vaccinated against the flu, should wear a mask for the duration of

### ***Promotion, preservation and protection of the community's health***

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the influenza season while working in patient care areas. All other county residents aged 6 months and older are strongly recommended for flu vaccination, and their medical providers are encouraged to help them achieve this vital public health goal.

**PERSONS COVERED**

“Health care personnel” are all persons, including paid and unpaid employees, contractors, students, and volunteers, who work in areas where patient care is provided in a licensed or unlicensed facility subject to this Order, or who, otherwise, have direct contact with patients at such a facility.

Health care personnel includes, but is not limited to, physicians (e.g., in private practice or healthcare systems), nurses, nursing assistants, therapists, technicians, emergency medical service personnel, dental personnel, pharmacists, laboratory personnel, autopsy personnel, students and trainees, contractual staff not employed by the health-care facility, and persons not directly involved in patient care (e.g., clerical, dietary, housekeeping, laundry, security, maintenance, administrative, billing, and volunteers), but potentially exposed to infectious agents that can be transmitted to and from health care workers and patients.

For the purposes of this Order, emergency medical service personnel include paramedics, emergency medical technicians (EMTs), and advanced EMTs. Physicians who are licensed independent practitioners are also considered health care personnel, as well as employees of nursing homes and chronic care facilities, students in these professions, volunteers, and ancillary personnel.

**DURATION OF ORDER**

This order is ongoing indefinitely and applies to each and future influenza seasons unless the order is rescinded. The influenza season is defined as November 15, 2023, to March 31, 2024.

The Fresno County Department of Public Health shares with all healthcare professionals, facilities, and agencies the expressed goal of assuring that our local population receives safe and effective care. We trust that all settings, subject to this Order, will comply fully with it and will notify their HCP of its provisions.

*Rais Vohra MD*

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Rais Vohra, MD  
Interim Health Officer  
Fresno County Department of Public Health

8/23/2023  
Date

**Badge Color:**

