



December 15, 2021

Re: Influenza Season in British Columbia and Importance of Health Care Worker Vaccination

Dear Colleagues,

Every year in BC, influenza is a serious concern that causes significant morbidity and mortality; this year, with the continued transmission of COVID-19 in our communities, we need to do all we can to prevent influenza from circulating as well. While we are seeing limited influenza circulating in BC, other jurisdictions, including the United States, are seeing upticks in positive tests. As a result, we need to be prepared as we move into the peak of influenza season.

We know hospitalized patients and seniors in residential care are more vulnerable than healthy adults to severe illness or complications from influenza. To better protect health care workers and the patients and residents we care for, BC enacted the Influenza Control Program Policy in 2012, which requires health care workers, physicians, and visitors to be immunized against influenza or wear a mask in patient care areas during influenza season.

This year, this policy continues to be in effect, with the expectation that unvaccinated employees or physicians wear masks at all times in patient care areas as a professional practice standard. Reporting of your influenza immunization status remains mandatory.

This policy has been very effective in raising awareness of the measures we must all take to prevent influenza; most importantly leading to a significant rise in vaccination rates across the province while complementing measures we are taking to mitigate the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.

Thank you for continuing to be an integral part of our health care system and for taking these important measures to protect the health of our co-workers, patients, friends, family, and all British Columbians.

Sincerely,

Bonnie Henry
MD, MPH, FRCPC
Provincial Health Officer