



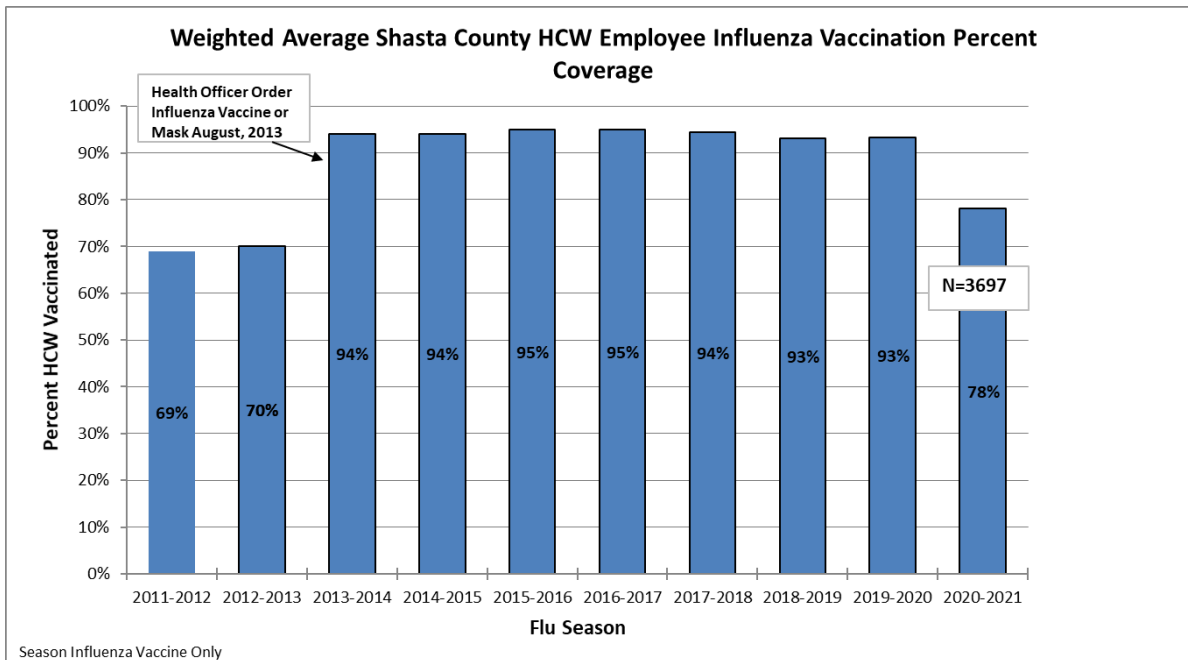
Health Advisory

Flu Vaccine or Mask for Health Care Workers (HCW) Update
 October 21, 2021

Please distribute to all providers in your practice

This health advisory reports HCW flu vaccination outcome percentages locally from the 2020-2021 flu season. The HCW flu vaccine or mask order is on-going for 2021-2022 and all subsequent year flu seasons (November 1 through April 30 each year).

A Health Officer order was issued August 2013 and is still in place requiring that all licensed health care facilities and ambulance services in Shasta County require their health care workers (HCW) receive an annual influenza vaccination or, if they decline, to sign a declination statement and wear a mask during each influenza season while working in patient care areas. Shown to increase influenza vaccination rates, similar flu vaccine policies are endorsed by numerous other jurisdictions, professional medical societies, patient safety organizations, hospitals and other health care facilities in California, and across the nation.



HCW categories include employees, licensed independent practitioners (physicians, physician assistants and nurse practitioners with hospital privileges), volunteers, and contractors.

Following the Health Officer order, the aggregate flu vaccine coverage for health care worker *employees* at all five local general acute care hospitals in Shasta County rose remarkably--from 70% to 94%-- in just one flu season (2012-13 to 2013-14). Flu vaccine coverage for employees at these

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five facilities remained at a statistically higher aggregate of 93% for 2019-20 but has dropped to 78% (range 69% to 96%) for 2020-2021 (N=3697). Congratulations to Mayers Memorial Hospital as they were the only hospital who saw an increase in vaccination rates between 2019-2020 and 2020-2021 influenza seasons.

The aggregate flu vaccine adherence documented for *non-employee licensed independent practitioners (LIP)* (physicians, nurse practitioners and physician assistants with local hospital privileges) for all five hospitals combined increased from 79% in 2012-13 to 92% in 2016-2017 but remained at 69% in 2019-2020 and 2020-2021.

The eight Skilled Nursing Facilities (SNF) reporting had a mean employee flu vaccine rate in 2019-2020 of 94% but vaccine rates decreased to 75% (range 61% to 99%) for 2020-2021. Vaccination rates declined for all but one SNF's. Congratulations to Redding Post Acute for exceeding the 2019-2020 flu vaccination rate and achieving 99% coverage in 2020-2021.

The 2020-2021 flu vaccination rates among health care workers declined not only locally but across the state of California compared to pre-pandemic levels. As we approach a new influenza season and ongoing unknowns regarding COVID-19, there is room for improvement in flu vaccination coverage.

Conclusion

Since implementing the Shasta County HCW flu vaccine order in 2013, influenza vaccination rates across our communities' health care facilities has increased significantly. However, due to many challenges during the COVID-19 pandemic, there was a significant decrease in healthcare worker influenza vaccination rates from the 2019-2020 influenza season to the 2020-2021 influenza season. Providers, please make your best efforts to receive flu vaccine timely this year and to document that you have done so, protecting yourself and your family, as well as co-workers, patients, and their families. We appreciate your leadership and support in continuing this partnership to protect the residents of our community.

This 2021-2022 flu season there are no changes to the flu vaccine or mask order. For a review of the rationale, goals, Health Officer order, duration, required facilities, enforcement, definitions, legal authority and an FAQ regarding flu vaccine or mask in Shasta County, please visit our website at http://www.co.shasta.ca.us/index/hhsa_index/Community_partnerships/med_professionals/FluVaxMedProfs.aspx. For any additional questions, please contact Daniel Walker, Epidemiology and Evaluation Supervisor, Shasta County HHS—Public Health at (530) 229-8488.

Reporting annual vaccination rates: Skilled nursing facilities and hospitals, please report flu vaccine rates for your employee, medical staff, contractor and volunteers to our infectious disease epidemiologist, by April 30th each year, at 229-8488 or via fax at 245-6760 or email at dwalker@co.shasta.ca.us. Acute care hospitals have been required to report vaccine rates to the federal Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services as part of its Hospital Inpatient Quality Reporting Program for years.

Sincerely,
Karen Ramstrom, DO, MSPH
Health Officer, Shasta County

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