



County of San Diego

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ORDER OF THE HEALTH OFFICER

(Masking or Vaccination of Healthcare Personnel during Annual Influenza Season)

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) preliminary estimate for the 2023-2024 influenza season resulted in between 34 million to 75 million illnesses, between 380,000 to 900,000 hospitalizations, and between 17,000 to 100,000 deaths. Within the county of San Diego, the 2023-2024 flu season resulted in 19,035 cases, and 63 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 healthcare personnel are at risk for both contracting influenza and transmitting the virus to their vulnerable patients. Patients in healthcare facilities are especially vulnerable to influenza. Masking and/or vaccination of healthcare personnel protects patients and reduces employee absenteeism during influenza season. The CDC recommends that all healthcare personnel receive an annual influenza vaccination.

Since 2014, the Health Officer of the County of San Diego (Health Officer) has mandated masking in healthcare settings and for healthcare professionals during annual influenza seasons, unless they have received a current influenza vaccine.

The Health Officer therefore **ORDERS** pursuant to California Health and Safety Code section 120175:

1. Healthcare personnel in licensed acute care hospitals, ambulatory and community clinics, emergency medical service agencies, long-term care and skilled nursing facilities, and private physician practices are to wear a mask for the duration of influenza season while in contact with patients or working in patient care areas.
2. For purposes of this Order, “healthcare 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, or who, otherwise, have direct contact with patients.
3. Healthcare personnel with an up-to-date seasonal influenza vaccination are exempt from this Order.
4. This Order supersedes any prior Order regarding this subject and shall remain in effect for this influenza season, and every year thereafter unless otherwise rescinded or superseded by the Health Officer.

IT IS SO ORDERED.



Ankita Kadakia, MD
Interim Public Health Officer
County of San Diego

Dated: October 29, 2024

Health Officer Order Resources

For additional information regarding this Health Officer Order, the following documents can be found at the County of San Diego, HHSa Public Health Services, Immunization Program website at

<https://www.sandiegocounty.gov/iz>

- [Fact Sheet: Influenza Vaccination for Healthcare Personnel](#)
- [Frequently Asked Questions about Influenza Vaccinations](#)

Further questions may be directed to the County Immunization Unit at (866) 358-2966 or e-mail to izinfo.hhsa@sdcounty.ca.gov