



B.C. government suspends mandatory flu shots for health workers for one year; B.C. backs off health workers flu shot plan

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VANCOUVER - The B.C. government has temporarily backed away from its mandatory flu vaccination policy for thousands of provincial health care workers.

Instead of forcing workers to get flu shots, the Health Ministry says it will work towards getting compliance from workers in the first year of the program.

In a letter to B.C.'s health authority chief executive officers, deputy health minister Graham Whitmarsh says components of the influenza control policy would not be enforced for the first year.

The policy was to go into effect Dec. 1 and required employees who work with patients to get a flu shot or wear a mask under threat of discipline, including dismissal.

Several health-care unions, including the Health Sciences Association, launched a grievance arguing their workers are entitled to privacy and their own choice on the matter.

Association president Reid Johnson says the union is pleased the government has decided to take a different approach and that it's happy to work with the Health Ministry to implement the flu prevention policy.

The Canadian Press

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