



# Province declares start of flu season; mask or vaccination policy in effect

November 28, 2014

Effective December 1, British Columbia will be in flu season, and HSA members who work in patient care areas in hospitals (ie, where patients are or are likely to be present) are reminded to be vaccinated against influenza or, alternatively, wear a protective mask during flu season.

As in previous years, health care workers who work in patient care areas are strongly encouraged to be vaccinated annually against influenza. If you chose not to be vaccinated you will be required to wear a surgical/procedure mask during the flu season ... which generally runs to the end of March. During an influenza outbreak, the mask-wearing policy will be suspended, and health care workers who have not been vaccinated may be redeployed or told to stay home. Some HSA members may have medical, religious, or other personal reasons for not getting a flu shot. In these cases, employers often attempt to find alternate work if possible. In the event that the Provincial Health Officer declares a flu outbreak at your facility, health care workers who refuse the vaccination can be sent home without pay.

HSA encourages health professionals to get immunized against seasonal influenza. Keep your immunization record current and your employee health file up to date by receiving a flu shot at an employer-run clinic.

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