

October 18, 2012

DIRECTIVE: JOB CORPS INFORMATION NOTICE NO. 12-25

TO: ALL JOB CORPS NATIONAL OFFICE STAFF
ALL JOB CORPS REGIONAL OFFICE STAFF
ALL JOB CORPS CENTER DIRECTORS
ALL JOB CORPS CENTER OPERATORS
ALL NATIONAL TRAINING AND SUPPORT CONTRACTORS
ALL OUTREACH, ADMISSIONS, AND CTS CONTRACTORS

FROM: EDNA PRIMROSE
National Director
Office of Job Corps

SUBJECT: Influenza Information Update

1. Purpose. To inform Job Corps centers about prevention, testing, and treatment issues for students and staff during the upcoming influenza season, based on the most recent recommendations from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).
2. Background. Every influenza season has the potential to cause significant illness, increased health care utilization, hospitalization, and death. As vaccines are the best way to prevent influenza, CDC encourages vaccination against seasonal influenza as soon as vaccines become available.

The seasonal influenza vaccine protects against the three main flu strains that research indicates will cause the most illness during each flu season. This year's influenza vaccine contains three influenza virus antigens: A/California/7/2009 (H1N1)-like, A/Victoria/361/2011 (H3N2)-like, and B/Wisconsin/1/2010-like (Yamagata lineage) strains.

Note that the 2012-2013 seasonal influenza vaccine does not protect against emerging variants of avian (H7N3) influenza A and swine (H3N2v) influenza A.

CDC recommendations for seasonal influenza vaccination during the 2012-13 season include “universal” annual vaccination for everyone age 6 months and older in the United States.

While everyone should get flu vaccine each flu season, it's especially important that the following groups get vaccinated either because they are at high risk of having serious flu-related complications or because they live with or care for people at high risk for developing flu-related complications:

- Pregnant women
- Children younger than age 5, but especially children younger than 2 years old
- People 50 years of age and older
- People of any age with certain chronic medical conditions, including asthma and diabetes
- People who are morbidly obese (body-mass index is 40 or greater)
- People who live in nursing homes and other chronic care facilities
- People who live with or care for those at high risk for complications from flu, including:
 - Health care personnel
 - Household contacts of persons at high risk for complications from the flu
 - Household contacts and out of home caregivers of children younger than 6 months of age (these children are too young to be vaccinated)
- American Indians/Alaska Natives

Some people should not get flu vaccine without first consulting a physician. These include:

- People who have a severe allergy (anaphylaxis) to chicken eggs
- People who have had a severe reaction to an influenza vaccination
- Children younger than 6 months of age (influenza vaccine is not approved for this age group)
- People who have a moderate-to-severe illness with a fever (they should wait until they recover to get vaccinated)
- People who developed Guillain-Barré syndrome (GBS) within 6 weeks of getting an influenza vaccine

3. Resources. For the most current information on influenza, visit the following CDC websites:

- a. <http://www.cdc.gov/flu/> - influenza overview
- b. <http://www.cdc.gov/flu/professionals/index.htm> - information for health professionals
- c. <http://www.cdc.gov/flu/freeresources/index.htm> - free influenza resources to download

4. Action.

a. **Vaccination.**

Based upon the CDC recommendations above, Job Corps centers should offer seasonal influenza vaccine on a voluntary basis to all students, not just to students with health conditions placing them at higher risk of medical complications. One dose of seasonal flu vaccine should be administered as early as September. Early administration of flu vaccine (September) is not associated with loss of protection, and late administration of flu vaccine (March) still affords protection as cases of seasonal flu often peak in late winter. Injectable vaccine (trivalent inactivated

vaccine or TIV) or nasal spray vaccine (live attenuated influenza vaccine or LAIV) may be administered, but nasal spray vaccine should not be administered to pregnant or immunocompromised students.

Influenza vaccination is strongly encouraged for all center health staff members, who could potentially transmit infection to students. Increased absenteeism among health staff could also reduce the capacity of a center to respond to increased demand for care in the event of an influenza outbreak on center. Health staff who decline influenza vaccination should sign a waiver to be placed in their personnel file, as is currently required for hepatitis B vaccine. All other center staff members are also encouraged to be immunized against influenza, but a written waiver is not required for those who decline.

Centers should first contact their state and/or local health departments to inquire if influenza vaccine is available for administration on center. If not, influenza vaccine can be purchased from the HHS Supply Service Center (SSC) in Perry Point, Maryland, or from private vendors.

Centers may wish to offer influenza vaccine administration to students in alternate locations, such as the cafeteria during the lunch break or the dormitories after hours, to increase voluntary participation. Members of the Student Government Association should be engaged in promoting influenza vaccination among their peers. Influenza vaccine should remain available on center throughout the flu season for new students and for students who may initially decline to be immunized.

b. Education.

Job Corps centers are encouraged to share with students and staff the following tips for controlling the spread of influenza on center:

- Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue when you cough or sneeze. Throw the tissue in the trash after you use it.
- Wash your hands often with soap and water, especially after you cough or sneeze. Alcohol-based hand cleansers are also effective.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose, or mouth. Germs spread that way.
- Try to avoid close contact with sick people.
- Encourage residential students to report to the Health and Wellness Center if they become ill. Sick nonresidential students and staff should be encouraged to stay home and limit contact with others.

c. **Planning.**

Job Corps centers are encouraged to review their pandemic flu plans to prepare for potential influenza outbreaks on center. For guidance on planning and preparation for pandemic influenza, refer to Job Corps Information Notice No. 06-08, "Pandemic Influenza Preparation for Job Corps" (September 11, 2007). A copy of the directive can be downloaded from the Job Corps Community website. Center health staff members are also strongly encouraged to contact their state and/or local health department to obtain the latest information about vaccine availability and recommendations for testing, treatment and prophylaxis in response to influenza cases among students. Centers should continue to use the Significant Incident Report (SIR) system to keep the National and Regional Offices of Job Corps informed about epidemic influenza on center. For the purpose of reporting, epidemic influenza will be defined by Job Corps as cases affecting 10 percent or more of Onboard Strength (OBS).

Closing of Job Corps centers in response to influenza is not anticipated, although new intakes might be restricted if cases reach the epidemic threshold on center. Non-residential students will be encouraged to remain at home at onset of influenza symptoms including fever, chills, sore throat, cough, and muscle pain. Residential students may be transported home by a family member or treated on center. Public transportation should not be used for students exhibiting symptoms of influenza. Public health recommendations encourage symptomatic treatment at home and discourage visits to a physician's office to obtain documentation and clearance for return to school or work. This approach is intended to reduce the burden on the health care system and reduce transmission of infection in health care settings. Patients can shed influenza virus 1 day before symptoms appear and up to 5 days after onset of illness. Students with influenza should not return to class or to work until fever has resolved and 5 days have passed since onset of symptoms. For Job Corps students, medical leaves for influenza will not require third party verification.

d. **Testing and Treatment.**

Centers should not stockpile diagnostic materials or antiviral medications for influenza, and should only conduct diagnostic testing and begin antiviral treatment or prophylaxis based upon specific recommendations from their state or local health department.

Addressees are to ensure this Information Notice is distributed to all appropriate staff.

5. Expiration Date. Until superseded.

6. Inquiries. Inquiries should be directed to Carol Abnathy at (202) 693-3283 or abnathy.carol@dol.gov, or Johnetta Davis at (202) 693-8010 or davis.johnetta@dol.gov.