



October 5, 2023

DIRECTIVE: JOB CORPS PROGRAM INSTRUCTION NOTICE NO. 23-04

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
ALL CENTER USERS

FROM: **RACHEL TORRES**
National Director
Office of Job Corps

SUBJECT: Guidance for Vaccine Preventable Respiratory Infections for the 2023-2024 Season

1. **Purpose.** This Program Instruction Notice is to inform the Job Corps community of transmissible viral respiratory infections that may result in center outbreaks during the 2023-2024 season. It provides prevention, testing, and treatment guidelines for influenza (flu) and COVID-19 infections based on the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) most recent recommendations.
2. **Background.**

Influenza (Flu)¹

Flu may present with symptoms similar to those of other respiratory infections, such as COVID-19 and common colds. Symptoms of flu are likely to appear suddenly and may include high fever, chills, sore throat, muscle aches, fatigue, cough, headache, and runny or stuffy nose. See [Similarities and Differences Between Flu and COVID-19](#) for more information. People can spread flu one day before symptoms appear and up to seven days after onset of the illness.²

Flu vaccination is an important tool for the prevention of severe flu illness and death and may decrease stress on the U.S. health care system during ongoing circulation of COVID-19. Flu vaccines are designed to protect against the flu viruses that are predicted to be circulating during the upcoming season.³ The CDC recommends annual flu vaccine for everyone 6 months and older.

¹ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (2022). [Influenza \(Flu\)](#)

² Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (2022). [How Flu Spreads.](#)

³ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (2022). [Influenza Activity and Composition of the 2022–23 Influenza Vaccine — United States, 2021–22 Season.](#)

It is especially important that people with certain health conditions and health care workers receive a flu vaccine annually. See [People at Higher Risk of Flu Complications](#) for more information. See [Seasonal Flu Vaccines](#) for more information for healthcare professionals.

Several Food and Drug Administration (FDA)-approved vaccine options are available to address student preference, history of allergic reaction, and medical contraindications. *New this year:* “Egg allergy alone necessitates no additional safety measures for influenza vaccination beyond those recommended for any recipient of any vaccine, regardless of severity of previous reaction to egg.”⁴

Changes for this season include educating recipients that although flu vaccines may not prevent all cases of flu, the illness may be less severe and less likely to result in hospitalization. Vaccines can take flu from “Wild to Mild” in severity. New promotional resources can be downloaded from the [Seasonal Influenza Resource Center](#).

COVID-19

Vaccination remains the [best protection](#) against COVID-19-related hospitalization and death. The CDC recommends everyone 6 months and older get an updated COVID-19 vaccine to protect against the potentially serious outcomes of COVID-19 illness this fall and winter. Updated COVID-19 vaccines from Pfizer-BioNTech and Moderna are available. The virus that causes COVID-19 is always changing, and protection from COVID-19 vaccines declines over time. Receiving an updated COVID-19 vaccine can restore protection and provide enhanced protection against the variants currently responsible for most infections and hospitalizations in the United States.

Medications such as [antivirals](#) can be used for the prevention or treatment of COVID-19 infection in individuals at increased risk of severe infection. Last season, those who received a 2022-2023 COVID-19 vaccine saw [greater protection](#) against illness and hospitalization than those who did not receive a 2022-2023 vaccine.

3. Action.

- a. Centers should offer flu vaccinations to students, in line with the following guidance:
 1. Centers may work with community partners (e.g., health departments, pharmacies) to access flu vaccines.
 2. Centers may directly order the 2023-2024 flu vaccines from vaccine distributors. Centers should place orders as soon as possible to ensure timely delivery.
 3. Centers are permitted to allow vaccine administration on center (e.g., in Health and Wellness or alternate locations on center) or off center (e.g., vaccination clinics or pharmacies).
 4. Vaccination should ideally be given prior to the end of October 2023. However, administration of the flu vaccine should continue until March 2024 for students who change their mind after initially declining the vaccine or newly arrive to center.
 5. Center health staff may access state immunization registries to confirm flu immunization and to record immunizations administered on center.
 6. Flu vaccines and COVID-19 vaccines can be administered at the same time by an authorized healthcare provider.

⁴ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (2023). [Prevention and Control of Seasonal Influenza with Vaccines: Recommendations of the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices — United States, 2023–24 Influenza Season](#)

7. Centers must provide the *Influenza Vaccine Information Statement (VIS)* when administering vaccine to students. Influenza VISs are no longer updated every year. The edition dated 8/6/2021 should be used for the current flu season.
 8. Health staff must review [vaccination options, side effects, and contraindications prior to administering vaccines](#).
- b. Centers should employ measures to encourage students to receive both flu and COVID-19 vaccines, including, but not limited to, the following:
1. Consider administering vaccines to students in alternate locations, such as the cafeteria during lunch break or in the dormitories after hours, to decrease barriers for vaccination.
 2. Use trusted sources of information (e.g., health providers, members of the Student Government Association, health occupation students) to promote vaccination.
 3. Consider contests and incentive-based promotion of both flu and COVID-19 vaccines.
- c. Centers must provide treatment and infection control when a student presents with flu- or COVID-19-like symptoms, including:
1. Instruct students to contact the Health and Wellness Center if they develop symptoms consistent with COVID-19 or flu. Appropriate Health and Wellness Staff must evaluate the student.
 2. Prior to testing for flu, test the student for COVID-19 per CDC guidelines: [Testing Guidance for Clinicians When SARS-CoV-2 and Influenza Viruses are Co-circulating](#). If the COVID-19 test is positive, follow isolation procedures outlined in [PIN 22-17 Ending of COVID-19 State of Emergency and Updating Job Corps Procedures](#) and [Attachment: Job Aid to Support PIN 22-17](#) or updated guidance.
 3. Clinicians may decide whether flu testing is warranted based on:
 - i. Individual [student's symptoms](#) and impact on individual risk management
 - ii. Flu activity on campus and if testing influences infection control decisions
 4. Clinicians should assess students for indication of antiviral treatment based on [Influenza Antiviral Medications: Summary for Clinicians](#).
 5. Instruct the student with flu-like symptoms to employ infection-control procedures including:
 - i. Stay in their dormitory room (if residential) or home (if nonresidential) and not return to class until their fever has resolved for 24 hours without treatment and symptoms have improved, at least 4-5 days after symptoms began.⁵
 - ii. Limit use of public [transportation](#).
- d. Job Corps centers should plan for outbreaks of seasonal respiratory infections and respond appropriately by:
1. Reviewing their Center Pandemic Plans for potential outbreaks on center.
 2. Complete SIRs for flu only if 10 percent or greater of the center's on-board strength has flu-like symptoms within a 7-day timeframe.
 3. Complete an SIR for each new COVID-19 case among students or staff in accordance with PIN 22-17 Attachment A. Job Aid Ending of COVID-19 State of Emergency.

⁵ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (2022). [Stay Home When You're Sick](#).

- e. Addressees are to ensure this Information Notice is distributed to all appropriate staff.
4. Resources. For the most current information on COVID-19 and flu, visit the following CDC websites:
 - a. [Seasonal Flu Vaccines](#)
 - b. [Influenza Vaccination: A Summary for Clinicians](#)
 - c. [CDC Communication Resource Center](#) – free flu educational resources to download
 - d. [Updated Inactivated Influenza Vaccine Information Statements \(VIS\)](#) dated 8/6/2021
 - e. [Misconceptions about Seasonal Flu and Flu Vaccines](#)
 - f. [COVID-19](#)
 - g. <https://www.cdc.gov/rsv/index.html> Protect yourself from COVID-19, Flu, and RSV
5. Expiration Date. Until superseded.
6. Inquiries. Inquiries about this Program Instruction Notice should be directed to Lesley Nesmith at Nesmith.Lesley@dol.gov.