

2005 alPHa Resolution A05-02

TITLE **Mandatory Influenza Immunization for Health Care Workers (HCWs)**

SPONSOR: alPHa Advocacy Committee, Board of Health of Haliburton, Kawartha, Pine Ridge District Health Unit, and Board of Health of Kingston, Frontenac and Lennox & Addington Health Unit

WHEREAS member organizations within the Association of Local Public Health Agencies are required by the Mandatory Health Programs and Services Guidelines to “promote immunization for children and adults through...policy and procedure development in institutions and to health care workers”¹¹; and

WHEREAS influenza vaccination is the single most effective means to reduce the impact of influenza²; and

WHEREAS transmission of influenza between infected HCWs and their vulnerable patients results in significant morbidity and mortality³; and

WHEREAS vaccination of HCWs in health care facilities has been shown to reduce total patient mortality, influenza-like illness, and serologically confirmed influenza⁴

WHEREAS the National Advisory Committee on Immunization (NACI) recommends that “people who are capable of transmitting influenza to those at high risk should receive annual vaccination, (including) health care providers who work in facilities and community settings, such as physicians, nurses and emergency workers”⁵; and

WHEREAS an objective of the Vaccine Preventable Disease Mandatory Program is to achieve 70% coverage for annual influenza vaccination of health care workers in contact with high-risk individuals⁶; and

WHEREAS recent studies of HCWs in hospitals and Long Term Care Facilities have shown vaccination rates of 26% to 61%⁷; and

WHEREAS HCWs and their employers have a duty to actively promote, implement, and comply with influenza immunization recommendations in order to decrease the risk of infection and complications in the vulnerable populations for which they care; and

WHEREAS alPHa believes that in the absence of contraindications or precautionary reason, refusal of HCWs who are involved in direct patient care to be immunized against influenza implies failure in their duty of care to their patients; and

WHEREAS such refusals of voluntary immunization often originate from lack of awareness about the demonstrated effectiveness and safety of the vaccine;

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that alPHa urge the Minister of Health and Long-term Care in consultation with the CMOH and PIDAC to introduce legislation to require mandatory annual vaccination against influenza for all health care workers and other service providers in facilities and community settings, who, through their activities, are potentially capable of transmitting influenza to those at high risk for influenza complications, with allowances for exemptions based on the most current research on contraindications and precautions as reported from time to time by the NACI.

^{1-5,7} *Statement on Influenza Vaccination for the 2004-2005 Season*. National Advisory Committee on Immunization (NACI), Canada Communicable Disease Report, Volume 30 • ACS-3, 15 June 2004

⁶ Mandatory Health Programs and Services Guidelines, 1997, Vaccine Preventable Disease, p. 48. Ontario Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care