

AVI350 – INFLUENZA PREVENTION

Interior Health would like to recognize and acknowledge the traditional, ancestral, and unceded territories of the Dākelh Dené, Ktunaxa, Nlaka’pamux, Secwépemc, St’át’imc, Syilx, and T̓sílhqot’in Nations, where we live, learn, collaborate and work together.

Interior Health recognizes that diversity in the workplace shapes values, attitudes, expectations, perception of self and others and in turn impacts behaviors in the workplace. The dimensions of a diverse workplace include the protected characteristics under the human rights code of: race, color, ancestry, place of origin, political belief, religion, marital status, family status, physical disability, mental disability, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, age, criminal or summary conviction unrelated to employment.

1.0 PURPOSE

The purpose of this policy is to ensure Interior Health (IH) is in alignment with the Provincial Influenza Prevention Policy¹. The goal of this policy is to prevent the spread of influenza and reduce its impact.

2.0 DEFINITIONS

TERM	DEFINITION
<i>Covered Individuals</i>	<i>All IH employees (unionized and excluded), other credentialed professionals (including physicians), residents, volunteers, students, contractors, and vendors who attend or may attend a Patient Care Area.</i>
<i>Influenza</i>	<i>Influenza is a viral infection of the respiratory system.</i>
<i>Medical Mask</i>	<i>A medical grade mask that meets standards as set out by American Society for Testing (ASTM). The Medical Mask provides the wearer protection against droplets. It also protects others from the wearer’s respiratory emissions. See IH’s Medical Mask guidelines.</i>
<i>Patient Care Area</i>	<i>An area within a health care facility (including a contracted facility), hallway or lobby, which is accessible to patients, residents or clients who are there to access care or services. This includes any other location where care is provided, such as home and community care locations (including a client’s home). It does not include locations such as administrative areas or private offices which are not generally accessed by patients, residents or clients.</i>
<i>Policy Application Date</i>	<i>The date established annually by the Provincial Health Officer after which all persons covered under this Policy are expected to be vaccinated against influenza or wear a mask in accordance with this Policy. The Policy Application Date will usually be no later than the first week of December.</i>

Policy Sponsor: VP, Human Resources and Professional Practice	1 of 3
Policy Steward: Corporate Director, Workplace Health and Safety	
Date Approved: September 2023	Date(s) Reviewed-r/Revised-R: April 2024 (R)
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TERM	DEFINITION
<i>Policy Application Period</i>	<i>A period of time determined by the Provincial Health Officer that starts on the Policy Application Date. The Policy Application Period will usually be from the end of November until the end of March but may vary with seasonal epidemiology and will also include any period of time relating to novel strains of influenza. During the Policy Application Period, Covered Individuals will be expected to be vaccinated against influenza or wear a surgical/procedure mask in accordance with this Policy.</i>
<i>Visitors</i>	<i>Any other persons not included in the definition of Covered Individuals who attend a Patient Care Area.</i>

3.0 POLICY

- 3.1 This Policy applies to both Covered Individuals and Visitors as follows:
 - 3.1.1 Covered Individuals are expected to be vaccinated annually against influenza or wear a medical mask during influenza season when in a patient care area in accordance with this Policy.
 - 3.1.2 Visitors who are unvaccinated are expected to wear a Medical Mask when in a Patient Care Area in accordance with this Policy.
- 3.2 Other policies may supersede this Policy, including:
 - [AVI300 Staff Respiratory Infection Outbreak Management](#)
 - Any provincially mandated policy

4.0 PROCEDURES

- 4.1 All Covered Individuals must annually advise Interior Health whether they have chosen to vaccinate or mask through the [Provincial Online Reporting Tool](#) by the Policy Application Date.
- 4.2 During the annual Policy Application Period, Covered Individuals and Visitors who are not vaccinated against influenza are expected to wear a Medical Mask provided by IH while at a Patient Care Area. Individuals expected to wear a Medical Mask will be responsible for maintaining their mask in good condition in accordance with IH protocols.
- 4.3 Covered Individuals should continue to use personal protective equipment and abide by IH’s infection control practices to prevent the transmission of communicable diseases, including influenza.
- 4.4 Covered Individuals who experience influenza-like illness/respiratory infection should follow IH’s established reporting protocols (e.g., informing their supervisor, the Employee Absence Reporting Line [EARL], and the Provincial Workplace Health Contact Centre [PWHCC] as necessary).
- 4.5 IH will inform Visitors of the requirements of this Policy and will make Medical Masks available to Visitors.

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- 4.6 Visitors are requested to avoid Patient Care Areas while experiencing influenza-like/ viral respiratory illness.
- 4.7 Interior Health will collect influenza vaccine coverage data for Covered Individuals who have reported their vaccination status and report aggregate information to health authority leadership and the BC Centre for Disease Control (BCCDC). May be written or presented in flow charts.
- 4.8 Consequences of Non-Compliance
 - 4.8.1 Any Covered Individual found in violation of this Policy may be subject to remedial and/or disciplinary action up to and including termination of employment, cancellation of contract and/or revocation of privileges.
 - 4.8.2 Any Visitor found in violation of this Policy may be denied access to Patient Care Areas until the Visitor complies with this Policy.

5.0 REFERENCES

1. Government of BC. [Influenza Prevention Policy](#)
2. Schanzer DL, Mcgeer A, Morris K. Statistical estimates of respiratory admissions attributable to seasonal and pandemic influenza for Canada. *Influenza and other Respiratory Viruses*. 2013;7(5):799-808.
3. Schanzer DL, Langley JM, Tam TWS. Role of influenza and other respiratory viruses in admissions of adults to Canadian hospitals. *Influenza and other Respiratory Viruses*. 2008;2(1):1-8.
4. Schanzer DL, Langley JM, Tam TW. Hospitalization attributable to influenza and other viral respiratory illnesses in Canadian children. *Pediatr Infect Dis J*. 2006;25(0891-3668; 0891- 3668; 9):795-800.
5. Schanzer DL, Sevenhuysen C, Winchester B, et al. Estimating influenza deaths in Canada, 1992-2009. *PLoS ONE*. 2013;8(11).
6. Interior Health. [Biological Exposure Control Plan](#)
7. Interior Health. [AV0100 – Occupational Health and Safety Program Policy](#)
8. Interior Health. [AV1300 – Staff Respiratory Infection Outbreak Management Policy](#)
9. OHS Solutions. [Influenza Self Reporting](#)

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