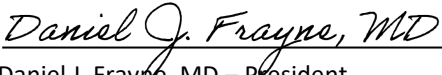




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Policy Title:	Vaccination Program
Department:	Infection Prevention
Origination Date:	March 23, 2015
Approving Officer:	<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between; align-items: center;"> <div style="text-align: center;">  Daniel J. Frayne, MD – President </div> <div style="text-align: center;"> 07/08/2022 Date </div> </div>
Last Date Reviewed:	July 1, 2022
Board Approval:	July 13, 2022

I. Purpose

The purpose of this policy is to protect staff, affiliates, and patients through the implementation of reasonable precautions to prevent the transmission of vaccine-preventable diseases. The MAHEC vaccine program is an essential part of infection prevention and control. This policy outlines the COVID-19 and Influenza Vaccination Program and is based on guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services (NCDHHS).

II. Scope

This policy is applicable to all employees, students, and affiliates of Mountain Area Health Education Center (MAHEC).

III. Responsibility

A. Infection Prevention & Employee Health:

1. Review and update the Vaccination Program policy annually.
2. Provide ongoing consultation regarding the implementation of and serve as contact persons for questions/problems regarding the Vaccination Program.
3. Develop and coordinate vaccination educational programs for health care personnel as needed.
4. Maintain records of vaccinations.
5. Ensure confidentiality of vaccination records.
6. Provide employees with copies of their records as requested.
7. Review and approve medical exemptions.

B. Student Affiliate Managers

1. Communicate the vaccination program requirements to students.
2. Ensure student compliance with requirements.
3. Maintain vaccination documentation of students.

C. Department Directors, Managers, and Supervisors:

1. Coordinate vaccination program engagement with Employee Health.
2. Ensure employee compliance with the Vaccination Program.
3. Coordinate with Talent Management, as needed, to determine actions for employee non-compliance.

D. Employees and affiliates:

1. Provide documentation, as requested, to Employee Health or designee.
2. Comply with Vaccination Program.

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E. Talent Management:

1. Ensure new hires are aware of the Vaccination Program.
2. Work with department leaders and Employee Health to ensure employee compliance.
3. Review and approve or deny religious exemptions.

IV. Definitions:

- A. **CDC** – Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.
- B. **COVID-19** – a respiratory disease caused by SARS-CoV-2, a new coronavirus discovered in 2019.
- C. **Diphtheria** – a bacterial infection affecting the mucous membranes of the throat and nose. A sheet of thick, gray matter covers the back of the throat, complicating breathing.
- D. **Primary Series** – For COVID-19 vaccine dosing, a 2 dose series of an mRNA COVID-19 vaccine (Pfizer-BioNtech and Moderna) or a single dose of Janssen COVID-19 vaccine.
- E. **Healthcare Personnel (HCP)** – all paid and unpaid persons working in healthcare settings who have the potential for exposure to patients and/or to infectious materials, including body substances, contaminated medical supplies and equipment, contaminated environmental surfaces, or contaminated air. HCP include but are not limited to: physicians, nurses, medical assistants, therapists, technicians, dentists, dental personnel, pharmacists, laboratory personnel, students and trainees, contractual staff not employed by the healthcare facility, and persons (e.g., clerical, dietary, housekeeping, laundry, security, maintenance, administrative, billing, and volunteers) not directly involved in patient care but potentially exposed to infectious agents that can be transmitted to and from HCP and patients.
- F. **Hepatitis B** – a virus that infects the liver. It spreads through exposure to blood and bodily fluids.
- G. **Influenza** – a common contagious viral respiratory illness that infects the nose, throat, and lungs.
- H. **Measles** – or rubeola, is a viral respiratory infection. Measles is very contagious, and spreads through contact with infected mucus and saliva.
- I. **Mumps** – a contagious viral infection of the salivary glands most commonly affecting children. The most obvious symptom is swelling of one or both of the salivary glands on the sides of the face.
- J. **Non-pharmaceutical Interventions** – everyday preventive actions, apart from pharmaceutical interventions— such as getting vaccinated and taking medicine, that people can take to prevent the spread of respiratory illnesses like COVID-19. It includes, but is not limited to: maintaining physical distance from others, wearing masks, isolating at home when sick, quarantining when exposed to others with the illness, and hand hygiene.
- K. **Pertussis** – a contagious respiratory disease also known as whooping cough. It is caused by the bacterium *Bordetella pertussis*.
- L. **Rubella** – or German measles, is a contagious viral disease, with symptoms like mild measles. It can cause fetal malformation if contracted in early pregnancy.
- M. **Tetanus** – an infection caused by *Clostridium tetani*; this bacterium produces a toxin that affects the brain and nervous system, leading to stiffness in the muscles.
- N. **Up to date** – For COVID-19 vaccine dosing, a person who has received all recommended doses in their primary vaccine series, and booster doses, when eligible.
- O. **Varicella** – a contagious disease caused by the varicella-zoster virus (VZV). It causes a blister-like rash, itching, tiredness, and fever most common in children.

V. General

A. COVID-19 VACCINATION

1. All **MAHEC employees, affiliates, and students**, including contracted and/or PRN employees working in a MAHEC facility are required to obtain a primary series of COVID-19 Vaccination or have an approved medical or religious exemption prior to the first day of onboarding.

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2. The specific COVID-19 vaccine required will be the standard vaccination recommended by the CDC.
3. Employees, students, and affiliates who receive an approved exemption and are unvaccinated will:
 - a. Wear a 3 ply cloth, surgical/procedure, Kn95/Kf94, or N95 (as appropriate) mask while on campus. The employee may remove the mask only when eating and drinking or when alone in their private office.
 - b. The employee must maintain 6 feet of physical distance from other people as often as possible, in breakrooms, and whenever removing their mask to eat or drink.
 - c. Adhere to non-pharmaceutical intervention as deemed appropriate by Employee health

B. INFLUENZA VACCINATION

1. All **MAHEC employees**, students, and affiliates including contracted and/or PRN employees working in a MAHEC facility are required to obtain the influenza vaccine annually or have an approved medical or religious exemption by October 31st of each calendar year.
2. The specific flu vaccine required (e.g., injectable, inactivated, recombinant, nasal spray) is the standard vaccination that the CDC recommends for that flu season.
3. Employees, students, and affiliates will provide proof of vaccination or exemptions by October 31st
 - a. Employees will provide proof to Employee Health
 - b. Students and affiliates will provide proof to affiliate managers
4. Employees and students who receive an approved exemption will wear a surgical/procedure or kn95 mask while in MAHEC facilities during the flu season. The mask may be removed when eating and drinking or while alone in their private office with the door shut.

***NOTE:** Every flu season is different. Since it takes about two weeks after vaccination for antibodies to develop in the body that protect against influenza virus infection, the CDC advises that people get vaccinated so they are protected before influenza begins spreading in their community. Specifically the flu vaccine should be given as soon after it becomes available, ideally by October.*

C. ACCESS TO VACCINATION

1. Infection Prevention and Employee Health will communicate with employees about the availability of COVID-19 an influenza vaccines provided by MAHEC at no cost to employees.
2. MAHEC will not reimburse employees for any cost incurred by receiving COVID-19 or influenza vaccination administered outside of the organization, though the vaccine is covered by the MAHEC employee health plan.
3. In the event of an influenza vaccine shortage, Infection Prevention and Employee Health will communicate criteria for administration of available vaccine. Generally, priority will be given to employees who provide direct hands-on patient care, have a high risk of exposure to patients with influenza, and/or are high risk for serious complications from influenza.

D. EXEMPTIONS

1. MAHEC employees may request exemptions due to medical contraindications or religious beliefs. Personal preferences do not constitute religious beliefs.
2. Exemption forms must be submitted and approved or denied no later than 14 days prior to the deadline:
 - a. **For Influenza** – October 31st of each calendar year or by 30 days after beginning employment at

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MAHEC. Exemption submission is due October 17th or 14 days prior to the deadline for new hires.

- b. **For COVID-19** – first day of onboarding for new hires, students, and affiliates.
3. The Proof of Medical Exemption Forms for both COVID-19 and Influenza Vaccines are on the MAHEC Intranet.
 4. Employees, affiliates, and students will submit:
 - a. **Medical Exemption forms** to Employee Health
 - b. **Religious Exemption forms** to Talent Management
 5. Responses to requests for exemptions shall be provided to the employee within 14 days of the date they are submitted.
 6. If exemption is granted for influenza, the employee, students, or affiliates must submit a new request for the exemption each year to which the condition applies.
 7. Employee Health and/or Talent Management may request additional information if necessary to adequately evaluate a request for exemption.

The employee, student, or affiliate must return the requested information within 10 business days from the date of the initial request.

8. Employee Health or Talent Management will notify the individual of approval or denial
9. If the exemption request is denied, the individual will be notified and expected to become vaccinated per the Vaccination Program.

E. PROGRAM ENFORCEMENT

1. Personnel who do not receive the COVID-19 vaccine, influenza vaccine, or do not have an approved exemptions prior to due dates, will not be allowed to work or receive PTO. They will be subject to any of the following measures as Talent Management deems appropriate: suspension, unpaid leave, and/or corrective action up to and including termination.
2. Exempted employees who refuse to wear a mask or adhere to non-pharmaceutical interventions while working will be subject to any of the following measures as Talent Management deems appropriate: suspension, unpaid leave, and/or corrective action up to and including termination.

It is the responsibility of Department leaders, supervisors, and managers to enforce that unvaccinated individuals wear the procedure/surgical mask and coordinate with Talent Management for non-compliance.

F. DOCUMENTATION

Employee Health and affiliate managers will maintain vaccination records in a secure file according to retention policy 6.HM.1001.

G. OTHER RECOMMENDED VACCINES FOR HEALTHCARE PERSONNEL

1. MAHEC does not require the following vaccinations, but highly recommends that clinical staff and other HCP receive them. The cost of MMR, Varicella, and Tdap vaccines are not paid for by MAHEC, though they are covered services under the MAHEC employee health plan.

Immunization	Guidelines
<p>Hepatitis B</p> <p>See 7.IP.1012 Exposure Control Plan for more specific information about Hepatitis B Vaccination Program</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If previously unvaccinated, give 3-dose series (dose #1 now, #2 in 1 month, #3 approximately 5 months after #2). • Give intramuscularly (IM).
<p>Measles Mumps Rubella (MMR)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For healthcare personnel (HCP) born in 1957 or later without serologic evidence of immunity or prior vaccination, give 2 doses of MMR, 4 weeks apart. • For HCP born prior to 1957, see http://www.immunize.org/catg.d/p2017.pdf . Give subcutaneously.
<p>Varicella (chickenpox)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • For HCP who have no serologic proof of immunity, prior vaccination, or diagnosis or verification of a history of varicella or herpes zoster (shingles) by a healthcare provider, give 2 doses of varicella vaccine, 4 weeks apart. • Give Subcutaneously.
<p>Tetanus, diphtheria, pertussis</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Give 1 dose of Tdap as soon as feasible to all HCP who have not received Tdap previously and to pregnant HCP with each pregnancy. • Give Td boosters every 10 years thereafter. • Give Intramuscularly (IM).
<p>Note: See 7.IP.1017 Tuberculosis Plan for information regarding TB skin testing.</p>	

2. Employee Health will keep record of any vaccination, immunity status, exemption, or declination for the above recommended vaccines in a secure employee health record. Such records are not required for the vaccines listed above except for Hepatitis B, as per OSHA standards. See 7.IP.1012 Exposure Control Plan for more details regarding Hepatitis B Vaccination records
3. Other vaccinations may be required in response to a public health emergency, and as directed by the CDC, OSHA regulations, local health department or the State.

References

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2. CDC. COVID-19 Workplace Vaccination Program. Retrieved from <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/recommendations/essentialworker/workplace-vaccination-program.html>
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4. Immunization Action Coalition. *Healthcare Personnel Vaccination Recommendations*. Retrieved from <http://www.immunize.org/catg.d/p2017.pdf>
5. OSHA. *Occupational Health and Safety Standards. COVID-19 Emergency Temporary Standard*. Retrieved from <https://www.osha.gov/laws-regs/regulations/standardnumber/1910/1910.502>