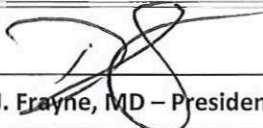




Policy No.: 7.IP.1022	Page No: 1 of 7
Policy Title:	Vaccination Program
Department:	Infection Prevention
Origination Date:	March 23, 2015
Approving Officer:	 Daniel J. Frayne, MD – President <span style="float: right;">             8/2/21              Date           </span>
Last Date Reviewed:	August 1, 2021
Board Approval:	

**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), as applicable.

**II. Scope**

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

**III. Responsibility**

**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

**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

**Employees and affiliates:**

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

**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 religious exemptions

Policy No.: 7.IP.1022	Page No: 2 of 7
Policy Title: Vaccination Program	

#### IV. Definitions:

1. **CDC** – Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
2. **COVID-19** – a respiratory disease caused by SARS-CoV-2, a new coronavirus discovered in 2019.
3. **Diphtheria** - a serious bacterial infection that affects the mucous membranes of the throat and nose. A sheet of thick, gray matter covers the back of the throat, making breathing hard.
4. **Fully Vaccinated**- For COVID-19 vaccines, refers to a person who is:
  - a. More than 2 weeks following receipt of the second dose in a 2-dose series (Pfizer or Moderna), OR
  - b. More than 2 weeks following receipt of one dose of a single-dose vaccine (Janssen/Johnson & Johnson)
5. **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 might include (but are not limited to) physicians, nurses, medical assistants, therapists, technicians, 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.
6. **Hepatitis B** - is a virus that infects the liver. Most adults who get it have it for a short time and then get better. This is called acute hepatitis B. Sometimes the virus causes a long-term infection, called chronic hepatitis B. Over time, it can damage your liver. It is spread through exposure to blood and bodily fluids.
7. **Influenza** – a common contagious viral respiratory illness that infects the nose, throat, and lungs.
8. **Measles** - or rubeola, is a viral infection of the respiratory system. Measles is a very contagious disease that can spread through contact with infected mucus and saliva. An infected person can release the infection into the air when they cough or sneeze.
9. **Mumps** - an extremely contagious viral infection of the salivary glands that most commonly affects children. The most obvious symptom is swelling of one or both of the salivary glands on the sides of the face. These glands are called the parotid glands, when they swell; the patient develops a "hamster-like" face. Sometimes the mumps virus can also cause inflammation of the testis, ovary, pancreas, or meninges.
10. **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.
11. **Pertussis** - also known as whooping cough, is a highly contagious respiratory disease. It is caused by the bacterium *Bordetella pertussis*. Pertussis is known for uncontrollable, violent coughing which often makes it hard to breathe.
12. **Rubella** – or German measles, is a contagious viral disease, with symptoms like mild measles. It can cause fetal malformation if contracted in early pregnancy.

Policy No.: 7.IP.1022	Page No: 3 of 7
Policy Title: Vaccination Program	

13. **Tetanus** - also called lockjaw, is a serious infection caused by *Clostridium tetani*; this bacterium produces a toxin that affects the brain and nervous system, leading to stiffness in the muscles. If *Clostridium tetani* spores are deposited in a wound, the neurotoxin interferes with nerves that control muscle movement.

14. **Varicella** - a very contagious disease caused by the varicella-zoster virus (VZV). It causes a blister-like rash, itching, tiredness, and fever. Most common in children, it can cause more significant complications when contracted by adults.

## V. General

### COVID-19 VACCINATION

1. All MAHEC employees, including contracted and/or PRN employees working in a MAHEC facility are required to obtain a COVID-19 Vaccination or have an approved medical or religious exemption by **September 30, 2021**.
2. The specific COVID-19 vaccine required will be the standard vaccination recommended by the CDC.
3. Employees will provide proof of vaccination or exemptions to Employee Health by September 30, 2021.
4. All new hires are required to be fully vaccinated or have an approved exemption within 45 days of employment.
  - a. All new hires who are not fully vaccinated must adhere to all non-pharmaceutical interventions required for exempted, unvaccinated employees. See #7.
5. All students and affiliates on MAHEC campuses are required to receive the COVID-19 vaccine prior to reporting to campus.
  - a. Students who cannot provide proof of vaccination will not be permitted to continue their program at MAHEC
  - b. Students will submit proof of vaccination to the affiliate manager.
  - c. MAHEC will not accept exemptions for students
6. Personnel who do not receive the COVID-19 vaccine or do not have an approved exemption by September 30, 2021 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.
7. Employees who receive an approved exemption and are unvaccinated will:
  - a. Wear a surgical/procedure mask. The employee may remove the mask only when eating and drinking or when they are 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 they remove their mask to eat or drink.
  - c. Adhere to non-pharmaceutical intervention as deemed appropriate by Employee health.
8. Exempted employees who refuse to wear a mask 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 and supervisors to enforce that unvaccinated individuals

Policy No.: 7.IP.1022	Page No: 4 of 7
Policy Title: Vaccination Program	

wear the procedure/surgical mask and coordinate with Talent Management for non-compliance.

9. Infection Prevention and Employee Health will communicate with employees about the availability of COVID-19 vaccines provided by MAHEC at no cost to employees.
10. MAHEC will not reimburse employees for any cost incurred by receiving COVID-19 vaccination administered outside of the organization, though the vaccine is covered by the MAHEC employee health plan.
11. Employee Health will maintain COVID-19 vaccine records in a secure employee health file.
12. In the event of a COVID-19 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 COVID-19, and/or are high risk for serious complications from COVID-19 infection.
13. 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.

#### **INFLUENZA VACCINATION**

1. All MAHEC employees, 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 31<sup>st</sup> 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 will provide proof of vaccination or exemptions (exemptions are for employees only) to Employee Health by October 31<sup>st</sup>
4. All new hires are required to be fully vaccinated or have an approved exemption within 30 days of employment.

All new hires who are not vaccinated must adhere to all non-pharmaceutical interventions required for exempted, unvaccinated employees. See #7.

5. All students and affiliates on MAHEC campuses are required to receive the seasonal flu vaccine by October 31<sup>st</sup> of each calendar year
  - a. Students who cannot provide proof of vaccination will not be permitted to continue their program at MAHEC
  - b. Students will submit proof of vaccination to the affiliate manager by October 31<sup>st</sup>
  - c. MAHEC will not accept exemptions for students
6. Personnel who do not receive the influenza vaccine or do not have an approved exemption by October 31<sup>st</sup> 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.
7. Employees who receive an approved exemption will wear a surgical/procedure 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.

8. If the exempted employee refuses to wear a mask while working, 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.

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

9. Infection Prevention and Employee Health will communicate annually with employees about the availability of influenza vaccines provided by MAHEC at no cost to employees.
10. MAHEC will not reimburse employees for the cost of flu vaccines administered outside of the organization, though the vaccination is covered by the MAHEC employee health plan.
11. Employee Health will maintain flu vaccination records in a secure employee health file.
12. 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.
13. 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.

***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.*

#### **RECOMMENDED VACCINES FOR HEALTHCARE PERSONNEL**

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

<b>Immunization</b>	<b>Guidelines</b>
<b>Hepatitis B</b>  See 7.IP.1012 Exposure Control Plan for more specific information about Hepatitis B Vaccination Program	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If previously unvaccinated, give 3-dose series (dose #1 now, #2 in 1 month, #3 approximately 5 months after #2).</li> <li>• Give intramuscularly (IM).</li> </ul>
<b>Measles Mumps Rubella (MMR)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 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.</li> <li>• For HCP born prior to 1957, see <a href="http://www.immunize.org/catg.d/p2017.pdf">http://www.immunize.org/catg.d/p2017.pdf</a> . Give subcutaneously.</li> </ul>

Immunization	Guidelines
Varicella (chickenpox)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>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.</li> <li>Give Subcutaneously.</li> </ul>
Tetanus, diphtheria, pertussis	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>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.</li> <li>Give Td boosters every 10 years thereafter.</li> <li>Give Intramuscularly (IM).</li> </ul>
<b>Note:</b> See 7.IP.1017 Tuberculosis Plan for information regarding TB skin testing.	

Employee Health will keep a record of vaccination, immune status, exemption, or declination for the above recommended vaccines in a secure employee health record. Such records are not required for any of the above except for Hepatitis B, as per OSHA standards. See 7.IP.1012 Exposure Control Plan for more details regarding Hepatitis B Vaccination records.

#### EXEMPTIONS

- MAHEC employees may request exemptions due to medical contraindications or religious beliefs. Personal preferences do not constitute religious beliefs.
- Exemption forms must be submitted and approved or denied no later than 14 days prior to the deadline:
  - For Influenza-** October 31<sup>st</sup> of each calendar year or by 30 days after beginning employment at MAHEC. Exemption submission is due October 17<sup>th</sup> or 14 days prior to the deadline for new hires.
  - For COVID-19-** September 30, 2021 or by 45 days after beginning employment at MAHEC. Exemption submission is due by September 16<sup>th</sup> for this initial policy or 14 days prior to the deadline for new hires.
- The Proof of Medical Exemption Form for both COVID-19 and Influenza Vaccines can be found on the MAHEC Intranet.
- Employees will submit:
  - Medical Exemption forms** to Employee Health
  - Religious Exemption forms** to Talent Management
- Responses to requests for exemptions shall be provided to the employee within 14 days of the date they are submitted.
- If exemption is granted for influenza, the employee must submit a new request for exemption each year to which the condition applies.
- Employee Health and/or Talent Management may request additional information if necessary to

Policy No.: 7.IP.1022	Page No: 7 of 7
Policy Title: Vaccination Program	

adequately evaluate a request for exemption.

The employee shall 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 employee will be notified and expected to become vaccinated per the Vaccination Program.

#### References

1. CDC. *Immunization of Health-Care Personnel: Recommendations of the Advisory Committee on Immunization Practices (ACIP)*. Retrieved from <https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/rr6007a1.htm>
2. CDC. COVID-19 Workplace Vaccination Program. Retrieved from <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/vaccines/recommendations/essentialworker/workplace-vaccination-program.html>
3. CDC. *Vaccination laws*. Retrieved from <https://www.cdc.gov/phlp/publications/topic/vaccinationlaws.html>
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>

