

Adopted

TOPIC: IN SUPPORT OF STATE LEGISLATION TO INCREASE INFLUENZA
VACCINATION OF HEALTH CARE WORKERS

SUBMITTED BY: Texas Woman’s University – Houston Center – Nursing Students’

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1 WHEREAS, The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s estimate of only 40% of
2 health care personnel are vaccinated annually for influenza, and that up to
3 20% of unvaccinated individuals in the United States will succumb to
4 influenza in any given season (The Joint Commission, 2009); and

5 WHEREAS, approximately 50% of influenza cases can be asymptomatic, which may
6 result in health care personnel inadvertently spreading seasonal flu viruses
7 to co-workers and most importantly to vulnerable and potentially immuno-
8 compromised patients, which can result in increased morbidity, mortality,
9 increased length of stay and increased health care costs (McLennan,
10 Gillett, & Celi, 2008); and

11 WHEREAS, some healthcare facilities and organizations aggressively push
12 immunization and yet report rates of only 50% compliance (Sartor, et al.,
13 2004). And despite education efforts over the past 26 years, there has been
14 no significant increase in the percent of voluntarily immunized health care
15 personnel within the United States (Poland and Jacobson, 2007); and

16 WHEREAS, mortality rates indicate that influenza accounts for the sixth leading cause
17 for adult deaths in the United States, accounting for approximately 36,000
18 people that die every year from influenza (Thompson, et al, 2003). The
19 elderly are particularly at risk, one in every 20 deaths in adults over age 65
20 is associated with the flu (Poland, 2005); and

21 WHEREAS, health care worker vaccination programs have decreased death and disease
22 among elderly patients in long-term care facilities (Talbot, et al, 2005), and
23 studies show that raising the immunization rate of health care workers in

24 long-term care facilities from 5 percent to just 50 percent has been
25 associated with a nearly 40 percent drop in patient deaths (Carman, W.,
26 2000); and

27 WHEREAS, a recent public survey in the United States revealed that 80% of the general
28 public favors seasonal flu vaccination of all health care personnel (Helms,
29 Polgreen, Issacs, & Leask, 2008); and

30 WHEREAS, the U.S. Healthy People 2020 goal for health care workers who are
31 vaccinated annually against influenza is 90% (U.S. Department of Health
32 and Human Services, 2010); and

33 WHEREAS, minority health care workers with patient contact are less likely to receive
34 influenza vaccines because of misconceptions, access to primary care
35 services, insurance, language barriers, cultural barriers, lack of trust in the
36 medical community, and lack of utilization of available community health
37 care services (The Council of State Governments Healthy States Initiative,
38 2007, p. 9); and

39 WHEREAS, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention website, only
40 12 states , not including Texas, have adopted laws guiding the practice of
41 influenza vaccination of all health care workers (2010); therefore be it,

42 RESOLVED, that TNSA supports and encourages state legislation that increases
43 vaccination rates among health care workers to prevent the spread of
44 seasonal flu viruses to vulnerable and potentially immuno-compromised
45 patients, which can result in increased morbidity, mortality, increased
46 length of stay and increased health care costs; and be it further

47 RESOLVED, that TNSA supports and encourages state legislation requiring health care
48 facilities to provide free influenza vaccinations to their employees and
49 mandate insurance coverage of all influenza immunizations; and be it
50 further

51 RESOLVED, that TNSA supports and encourages health care facilities to provide annual
52 education about the benefits and effectiveness of vaccinating all health care
53 workers, misconceptions about receiving the influenza vaccine, and the
54 effect of influenza on vulnerable and potentially immuno-compromised
55 patients; and be it further

56 RESOLVED, that TNSA supports and encourages health care facilities to develop
57 culturally appropriate programs to increase vaccination rates among
58 minority workers; and be it further

59 RESOLVED, that TNSA encourages legislation and development of hospital policies to
60 implement active declination for health care workers choosing to refuse
61 influenza vaccinations. Active declination includes, but is not limited to:
62 receiving additional education about the influenza vaccine, signing a
63 declination form citing their objection to receiving the vaccine, and
64 individual infection control measures to be taken to prevent the spread of
65 influenza; and be it further

66 RESOLVED, that TNSA supports and encourages influenza vaccination programs for all
67 health care students providing patient care; and be it further

68 RESOLVED, that TNSA publish an informative article in Imprint regarding the
69 importance of nursing students receiving vaccinations including the
70 influenza vaccine; and be it further

71 RESOLVED, that TNSA send copies of this resolution to the Public Health Committee:
72 Texas House of Representatives, the Committee on Health and Human
73 Services: Texas State Senate, the Texas Department of State Health
74 Services, the Governor of Texas, the U.S. Department of Health and
75 Human Services, The Joint Commission, the Centers for Disease Control
76 and Prevention, the American Nurses Association, the National Student
77 Nurses' Association, the Texas Nurses Association, the American Medical
78 Association, the American Hospital Association, the Partnership for
79 Prevention, the Society for Healthcare Epidemiology of America, the

80 American Association of Retired Persons, the National Association of
81 Public Hospitals and Health Systems, the Institute for Healthcare
82 Improvement, and the Oncology Nursing Society.

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