

SECTION 7B: PREVENTIVE EDUCATION AND CLINICAL SAFETY	POLICY: 7B.28
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PURPOSE:

- To ensure Agency staff are educated on respiratory virus infection prevention and control measures.
- To minimize the potential of contracting and spreading respiratory viruses (influenza, COVID, RSV, etc.) among Agency staff and patients.
- To maintain business operations as safely and efficiently as possible regardless of intermittent staff unavailability due to respiratory illness.

POLICY:

- The Agency is committed to educating staff members on the effectiveness and availability of respiratory vaccines and ensuring vaccination availability to staff to maintain a healthy environment.
- The Agency shall reimburse any staff member for healthcare costs associated with influenza or COVID vaccination (in accordance with Agency reimbursement policy).
- On an annual basis the Agency shall:
 - encourage and recommend available respiratory vaccinations (influenza, COVID, RSV, etc.) for all staff members.
 - provide educational information to staff on respiratory viruses, infection prevention, and vaccination, including vaccine reimbursement.
 - Obtain attestation from hands-on clinical staff regarding vaccination, reimbursement, and mask requirement.
- Hands-on staff shall agree and be required to mask during episodes of patient care provided during “flu” season defined as the wintery period between Dec 1st and March 31st of each year.
- Hands-on staff declining influenza and/or COVID vaccination may be restricted / prohibited from serving patients of specific pharmacy vendors as defined in contractual agreements or per pharmacy policy.
- Agency staff will self-monitor for respiratory infection-related symptoms and report illnesses per policy.

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PROCEDURE: REPORTING / STAFF ILLNESS

- Staff members testing positive for a respiratory illness (strep throat, RSV, COVID, influenza) or exhibiting acute respiratory symptoms shall provide notice as soon as possible per the Agency’s infection reporting tool.
 - Acute respiratory symptoms include fever of 103° or higher, or new, severe & persistent: congestion, runny nose, cough, sore throat, body aches and/or fatigue.
- Hands-on staff who test positive for a respiratory infection or exhibit acute respiratory symptoms must refrain from returning to patient care duties until they have been symptom-free for at least 48 hours without the use of medication.
- Office staff members are permitted to resume work once they are physically able to fulfill their job responsibilities. However, they must wear a mask continuously in the office for the duration of any symptoms.

PROCEDURE: REPORTING / CLIENT ILLNESS

- Each nursing visit shall minimally include observation of respiratory function. If no acute symptoms are noted or communicated by the client, a recorded set of vitals and respiratory assessment shall be conducted.
- Clients with active respiratory infections/illness or acute respiratory symptoms are not excluded from receiving nursing services.
 - Agency RNs shall follow manufacturer's guidelines and precautions concerning care and medication administration for clients who have an active respiratory infection or are displaying acute respiratory symptoms
 - Acute respiratory symptoms include fever of 103° or higher, or new, severe & persistent: congestion, runny nose, cough, sore throat, body aches and/or fatigue.
- Agency RNs providing treatment to clients known or suspected to have an active respiratory infection must don PPE throughout the occurrence of care.
 - Clinical documentation shall include narration of PPE usage and respiratory status of client.