

# Flu Vaccination Rates Remain Low!

OHA data show rates slow to recover after big drop during pandemic

Influenza vaccination rates among Oregon's health care personnel have not recovered from significant declines suffered during the COVID-19 pandemic, new Oregon Health Authority (OHA) data show. According to the Healthcare Worker Influenza Vaccination Dashboard published by OHA's Healthcare-Associated Infections (HAI) Program, 64% of the state's eligible health care workers from all facility types were vaccinated against the flu during the 2022-2023 flu season. This is similar to the 2021-2022 flu season rate of 63% -- a concern for state officials trying to prevent the virus's spread to people most at risk of severe illness and death.

The influenza vaccination rate among eligible health care workers had dropped by 25% between the 2019-2020 and 2022-2023



A pharmacist administers a Moderna Spikevax COVID-19 vaccine at a drug store, Wednesday, Sept. 20, 2023, in Cypress, Texas. Fall 2023 vaccination season is in full swing, with health officials in the U.S. urging both an updated COVID-19 shot and flu vaccine for most everyone. New this year are vaccines for older adults and women in late pregnancy to guard against another virus named RSV. (Melissa Phillip/Houston Chronicle via AP)

influenza seasons. "Health care workers are the first line of defense in protecting vulnerable patients and preventing a severe respiratory virus season from becoming a catastrophic one," said Rebecca Pierce, Ph.D., HAI Program manager. "That's why influenza vaccination of health care workers is a key strategy

for infection control in health care facilities."

OHA requires annual reporting of health care worker influenza vaccination data from four facility types – ambulatory surgery centers, dialysis centers, hospitals (including inpatient psychiatric facilities) and nursing facilities. "Influenza vacci-

nations among health care workers were significantly impacted during the pandemic, which is likely reflective of historically low rates of influenza during the 2020-2021 and 2021-2022 flu seasons," Pierce said. "However, flu transmission has returned to pre-pandemic levels. It's important that we focus on rebuilding

flu vaccination rates for this critical, front-line workforce."

The proportion of eligible health care workers who declined flu vaccination has increased over the years. For the 2022-2023 flu season, 15% declined, compared to 11% for the 2021-2022 season. The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services developed Healthy People 2020 with 10-year objectives for improving the health of all Americans, including showing progress toward a 90% influenza vaccination goal for the health care workforce. However, because Healthy People 2030 does not include a goal focused on increasing flu vaccinations among health care workers, Oregon continues to use the Healthy People 2020 goal as a way of directing public health action and showing where more support and education is needed.

To achieve 90% influenza vaccination coverage, Pierce said there are important steps health care facilities can take. Among public health recommendations is encouraging health care workers, including those not employed by the facility—contractors and volunteers—to get vaccinated at the beginning of every influenza season.

## Questions about your health care?

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### NOVEMBER 2

#### Street Roots

9-10:30 a.m.

211 NW Davis St, Portland

#### Mobile Showers

12-2 p.m.

247 SE 82nd Ave, Portland

### NOVEMBER 6

#### Doreen's Place (for residents only)

12-2:30 p.m.

610 NW Broadway St, Portland

### NOVEMBER 7

#### Resource Center

9-11 a.m.

650 NW Irving St, Portland

#### River District Navigation Center (for residents only)

11:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

1111 NW Naito Pkwy, Portland

#### Jean's Place (for residents only)

1:30-3:30 p.m.

18 NE 11th Ave, Portland

#### Union Gospel Mission

2-3 p.m.

3 NW 3rd Ave, Portland

### NOVEMBER 13

#### Clark Center (for residents only)

9-10:30 a.m.

1437 SE MLK Blvd, Portland

#### Mobile Showers

10 a.m. to 1 p.m.

4244 SE 91st Ave, Portland

### NOVEMBER 16

#### Street Roots

9-10:30 a.m.

211 NW Davis St, Portland

#### Mobile Showers

12-2 p.m.

247 SE 82nd Ave, Portland

### NOVEMBER 20

#### Doreen's Place (for residents only)

12-2:30 p.m.

610 NW Broadway St, Portland

### NOVEMBER 21

#### Union Gospel Mission

2-3 p.m.

3 NW 3rd Ave, Portland



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