



## **HEALTH ALERT: 2013- 2014 FLU SEASON**

### **NYSOASAS is adopting the requirements of the NYSDOH 2013-2014 influenza season public health campaign.**

As per NYS Department of Health, during the upcoming 2013-2014 Influenza season all healthcare personnel, as defined by Regulation for Prevention of Influenza Transmission by Healthcare and Residential Facility and Agency Personnel (10 NYCRR Section 2.59), who are not vaccinated against influenza will be required to wear a surgical or procedure mask during the influenza season while working in certain areas where patients may be present.

Facilities that must abide by this regulation include, but are not limited to, general hospitals, nursing homes, diagnostic and treatment centers, certified home health agencies, long term home health care programs, acquired immune deficiency syndrome (AIDS) home care programs, licensed home care service agencies, limited licensed home care service agencies and hospices (Article 28s, 36s and 40s).

We recognize that this regulation will be a mandate for all NYS OASAS Providers that are hospital based. In addition, we have included in this mandate the 12 OASAS Addiction Treatment Centers. All other OASAS Providers are strongly urged to follow the influenza prevention policies laid out in this regulation. It is the aim of OASAS to achieve an immunization rate in excess of 90% and thus reduce morbidity and mortality associated with Influenza.

#### **Reporting Requirements:**

In accordance with this legislation, all healthcare and residential facilities and agencies will be required to document the influenza status of all personnel. Documentation of vaccination must include the name and address of the individual who ordered or administered the vaccine and the date of vaccination. For more information about the Regulation for Prevention of Influenza Transmission by Healthcare and Residential Facility and Agency Personnel please go to:

[http://www.health.ny.gov/diseases/communicable/influenza/seasonal/providers/prevention\\_of\\_influenza\\_transmission/](http://www.health.ny.gov/diseases/communicable/influenza/seasonal/providers/prevention_of_influenza_transmission/).

Programs with non-mandated staff will have reporting requirements through the County Planning System. Two inquiries will be sent to the programs, initial vaccination rates will be collected (around or about October 30<sup>th</sup>) and then a follow up survey of vaccination rates several months later (around or about December 20<sup>th</sup>).

## **Addendum:**

### **What can I do to prevent the flu?**

- Wash your hands often with soap and warm water. Alcohol-based hand cleansers are also effective.
- Avoid touching your eyes, nose or mouth.
- Stay home from work or school if you are sick.
- Use a tissue when you cough, sneeze or spit, and dispose of the tissue in a covered trash bin.
- If you are unable to use a tissue, your arm is the next best thing to prevent using your hand and spreading the germs.
- Clean shared space more often, such as phone receivers, keyboards, steering wheels and office equipment.
- The influenza vaccine and the H1N1 vaccine will provide added protection.

### **How is the flu spread?**

The flu virus is spread from person to person when you inhale droplets in the air that contain the flu virus, or through respiratory secretions. The flu typically sweeps through large groups of people who spend time in close contact, such as school classrooms, college dormitories, military barracks, offices, and nursing homes. Flu symptoms include fever, cough, runny nose, sore throat, body aches, headache, chills, and fatigue. H1N1 flu causes similar symptoms and may also include vomiting and diarrhea. If you get these symptoms, stay home and limit contact with others until at least 24 hours after your fever has subsided without the use of medicine. Most people can recover from flu at home without need for medical treatment. However, if you are at high risk for complications of flu, contact your doctor.